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ABSTRACT

This practicum was designed to address the problem of preschoolers who attend a weekly full-time daycare program needing more exposure to children's literature to properly nourish their literacy development. Goals of the practicum sought to ensure that books and literacy experiences become more available for children, increase individualized reading time for children in their homes, and involve the community in assisting with preschoolers' literacy development. Community support was solicited for an on-site preschool library collection of children's literature for the 65 regular preschoolers in attendance. The books were color-coded into eight categories to teach children classifications and how to select books and return them to their proper location. Highlights of the program included: a unique library card, a motivational theme and logo, and a literacy song. Cultural presentations became a regular part of the program along with a link to the public library system through a monthly storytelling session. Creative play was incorporated into a program emphasizing emergent literacy via newsletters to parents on how they could become involved in their child's reading process. Community groups supported the program with books, money, or labor. One service organization built bookshelves in a literacy center. (Twenty-two appendixes include a parent questionnaire, promotional letters, book checkout sheets, library card, literacy center floor plan, and other highlights from the program. Twenty-nine references are attached.) (Author/MG)

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Nurturing Children's Literacy Through the Establishment of a Community-Funded Preschool Lending Library and an In-Home Family Reading Program

by

Susan Fay Ryan

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A Practicum II Report Presented to the Ed.D. Program
in Early and Middle Childhood
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Doctor of Education

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NOVA UNIVERSITY

1990

PRACTICUM APPROVAL SHEET

This practicum took place as described.

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This practicum report was submitted by Susan Fay Ryan under the direction of the advisor listed below. It was submitted to the Ed.D. Program in Early and Middle Childhood and approved in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education at Nova University.

Approved:

Aug. 24, 1990

Date of Final Approval of Report

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ABSTRACT

Nurturing Children's Literacy Through the Establishment of a Community-Funded Preschool Lending Library and an In-Home Family Reading Program. Ryan, Susan Fay, 1990: Practicum Report, Nova University ED.D. Program in Early and Middle Childhood.
Descriptors: Creative Play/Children's Literature/Critical Literacy Emergent Literacy/ Family Reading/Fantasy/ Library Services/Newsletters, Parent Attitudes/Parent Participation/Parent Role/Parents as Teachers/ Play/Prereading Experience/Preschool Children/Preschool Education/ Program Effectiveness/Reading Aloud to Others/Teacher Attitudes/

The writer designed the practicum to solve the problem as stated: Preschoolers attending a weekly fulltime daycare program needed more exposure to children's literature in order for their literacy development to be properly nourished. The first goal sought to ensure that books and literacy experiences become more available for children on site at the preschool. The second goal centered around increasing individualized reading/nurturing time for children in their homes by providing families with opportunities for shared reading experiences. A third goal aimed toward involving the community in assisting with preschoolers' literacy development.

To solve the problem, the writer/practitioner solicited community support for an onsite preschool library collection of children's literature for the 65 regular preschoolers in attendance. More than 800 books were donated, guaranteeing 12 books per child. The writer colorcoded books into 8 categories to teach children classifications and how to select books and return them to their proper location in the preschool library. The writer designed a number of components to make the program attractive to parent and child. Highlights were a unique library card indicating a literacy commitment to the child on the part of parents and preschool personnel, a motivational theme and logo, and a literacy song to be sung each day as a prereading activity.

Cultural presentations became a regular part of the program along with a link to the public library system through a monthly storytelling session. The writer's work on creative play from a previous study was incorporated into a program emphasizing emergent literacy via newletters to parents on how they could become involved in their child's reading process. Community groups supported the program with books, money, or labor. One service organization built bookshelves, a dropslot for returning books, and library counters with a child-high door to the literacy center. The library project will remain permanent, one that will generate annual fundraising activities for physical maintenance and updating of the facility along with stimulating literacy experiences for preschool youngsters.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Description of Community

The setting of the practicum is a licensed, private nonprofit child care center located in the west section of a southeastern Florida coastal town. Operating year round since 1969, the preschool was founded and organized by community residents and has had continuous partial funding by the county's United Way program. The preschool's director and staff of nine dedicate their efforts toward enriching the total development of children in their care: in meeting their physical, mental, social, and emotional needs. An initial enrollment of 12 children has expanded to serve 65 children (ages 2½ to 4½). A long waiting list for placement exists.

The underprivileged children at the preschool facility come primarily from a lower socioeconomic minority group: from single, working parent homes or from homes where both parents must work in order to provide a minimum standard of living for their family. They attend preschool from 7:30 a. m. to 5:30 p. m., five days per week.

The director of the preschool is a well-known, highly respected figure in the town, beloved by the children and their parents. A recipient of many awards from a number of civic organizations for her leadership and outstanding community service, she is the mother of nine children, now grown. She is proud of the loving, caring, calm

atmosphere she has created for the preschool youngsters. It would be apparent to researchers visiting the center that she intuitively provides a program best suited to the children's needs. Additionally, her staff continually update their childcare skills through attendance at inservice workshops mandated by county and state guidelines. At this time the director's major objective is to encourage busy, working parents to become involved in their children's early childhood education, particularly in the arena of literacy.

Writer's Role and Responsibilities

The writer, born and educated in the Northeast, holds an A.B. in political science, an M.S. in journalism, and an Ed.S. in gifted child education. She is a 16 year resident of the town where the practicum took place and has been a teacher for the same number of years. Her teaching background includes 3 years at private schools and 13 years with the state of Florida: the majority of that time has been spent teaching language arts at an innercity junior high school in the county where she resides. Her experience ranges all ability levels: Basic, Regular, Advanced, and Gifted. She is the mother of five children who attended Florida public schools and went on to successful college experiences in the North.

From 1986 - 1988, she worked with two alternative programs whose primary goal was dropout prevention. One was funded by the state, the

other by private corporations. Both programs were operated within a large county school system. Many disruptive students were enrolled in each program. The writer observed that the students in the alternative programs were lacking a background in children's literature. That cultural void left them without listening skills, inhibited their creative thinking processes, and imposed general restrictions on their reading ability. Their powers of concentration were minimal.

In an effort to close that gap, the writer wrote and earned a grant from a local education foundation which supplied her program with funds for a library of children's literature of the writer's choice. Her selections were made on the basis of the books' classic symbolism, their highly creative content, and their colorful, artistic appeal. The writer organized an innovative reading program entitled CHILDREN HELPING CHILDREN: THE MISSING LINK in which seventh and eighth grade alternative students read to 3 and 4 year-old preschoolers in the Title XX program located at the same school site. The most noticeable result of having a children's library housed in the classroom of the alternative program was the calming effect the books had on the teenage disrupters. They became able to sit for several hours at a time previewing and enjoying the books on their own before reading them to the younger children. The reading program had in fact added a new dimension to the term "behavior modification." An equally desirable effect could be observed in the attitudes of preschoolers as they looked forward to the reading adventure sessions with the junior high level

students. The writer learned that the majority of preschoolers received little or no individualized reading time in their home setting. Seeing that children are instilled with a love of reading at a young age remains of top priority with the writer. As a doctoral student in the field of Early/Middle Childhood, she continued to pursue that vision in 1988 at a private childcare facility where she initiated a practicum involving preschoolers and their parents in a reading/creativity enhancement program entitled PLAY: PARENTS AS LITERACY ADVOCATES FOR YOUNGSTERS. Her report combining recent readings on play research into a plan for parent advocacy has been included in the ERIC DOCUMENT international data base. In 1989, she was invited to join the board of directors at the nonprofit preschool where her major practicum has since been implemented. Postdoctorate, she intends to remain an active board member supporting the director as needed in promoting or creating programs of worth.

CHAPTER II

STUDY OF THE PROBLEM

Description of the Problem Situation

Preschoolers attending a weekly fulltime daycare program need more exposure to children's literature in order for their literacy development to be properly nourished.

1. A number of factors contribute to the problem.
   a. Working parents of the preschoolers do not have time or training to meet emergent literacy needs of their youngsters.
   b. Preschool childcare providers have limited time to offer individualized reading/nurturing activities for the children in their care.
   c. The number of children's books at the youngsters' homes and at the preschool is minimal.
   d. Parents have no time to visit local libraries with their children.
   e. Library services do not extend to the childcare center.

2. A number of factors would contribute to an ideal situation.
   a. Parents would become deeply involved in their children's reading/nurturing development.
   b. The preschool setting would be able to offer more

individualized reading/nurturing experiences for the children.

c. The preschool center would house a bountiful collection of children's literature.

d. Parents could have easy access to books for in-home reading to their children.

e. Public libraries would form a liaison with the preschool.

f. Children would become imbued with a lifelong love for reading to be passed on to succeeding generations.

g. The preschoolers would be nourished to maturity steeped in a high degree of literacy, fully prepared as adults to solve complex problems and contribute to the enrichment of society.

Documentation of the Problem

One method of problem documentation was provided through the writer's survey of the preschool classroom in conjunction with an interview with the preschool's cofounder and director who has husbanded the program for 24 years. The number of children's books on the premises was 55 books, less than 1 book per child for 65 children. The director indicated that she would like to add to the preschool's library so that each child would have access to a variety of children's literature on a continuing basis with an allowance of ten books per child. She believes in the importance of reading and reading-related activities for preschool children, but keeping an adequate ongoing supply of books on hand has been a problem. To begin with, funding for

books has been limited because of other high piority daycare center needs. Shelving for books and space for book displays have been sparse. Furthermore, books can easily deteriorate with handling by active youngsters; if loaned out, they may occasionally not be returned. A previously larger supply of books had considerably dwindled to the existing number.

Another means of documentation indicating the preschoolers' infrequent exposure to children's literature was a questionnaire which was disseminated to the children's parents (APPENDIX A). Results revealed that books are not in flux in their homes. Parents seldom take their children to bookstores to purchase books and rarely visit public libraries. The majority of parents place little emphasis on reading in their own daily routine and do not make exceptions for their children's routine.

Analysis of the Causes

Causes of the problem are rooted in society.

1. Economics is a major cause of the problem; primary caregivers need to work outside of the home in order to support their family.
2. Parents or guardians must address critical problems in the home environment of more urgency to them than literacy development.
3. Many of the children come from single-parent homes; they do not have the "luxury" of receiving attention from two parents.

4. Daycare becomes a way of life for the children.
5. Demands on the time of childcare providers do not permit their giving large blocks of individual attention to the preschoolers; group activities become the norm.
6. Many parents are untrained in the knowledge of children's literature and unaware of their own importance as reading role models for their children.

Relationship of the Problem to the Literature

Researchers attempting to solve the mysteries of the process of a child's learning-to-read have not yet found all the clues needed to document a full disclosure of method; however, they are convinced that knowing how to read is vital not only to a child's intellectual growth but also to his/her social growth and well being. In Achieving Literacy, Meek (1983) notes with alarm that children who cannot read and write are a source of worry, ". . . because they are exiles from the society of child learners in school and are threatened, by parents, teachers, and other adults, with exclusion from the wider social world outside school if they fail to become literate" (p. 1).

Affirming the benefits of reading and the pleasures young children derive from it, Strickland & Morrow (1989) emphasize, "Clearly, there is a great store of riches in books for young children" (p. 50). Singer & Singer (1985) point out the delights of reading-related rewards via storytelling using children's literature as a springboard.

They express strong sentiment that, "Making believe and pretending are among the wonders of the experience of being human" (p. 1), and write of joys derived from literacy experiences to be found in the ". . . limitless range of the human imagination" (p 1). Wolfgang & Sanders (1981) state the essence of reading is that communication happens when no other person is present. "Reading should be viewed as . . . the top rung on the ladder of representational growth" (p. 118).

Among researchers of the reading process the term 'emergent literacy' replaces that of 'reading readiness.' Dismissed along with it is the notion of a neural ripening and a precise point in time whereby a child is primed or ripe for beginning to read. Teale & Sulzby (1986) outline six concepts critical to understanding literacy development.

1. Children's emerging literacy is deeply rooted in early childhood home and community reading and writing experiences prior to formal instruction. 2. Writing and reading are interrelated experiences of language development which occur concurrently, not sequentially. 3. Children's surroundings and daily activities compose the background whereby important 'functions' of literacy are carried out in order to "get things done" (p. xviii). Both the functions and the forms of literacy are germane to its proper development. 4. From the age of birth to six, children engage in "critical cognitive work in literacy development" (p. xviii). 5. Through all of their social interactions and informal exposure to print children become literate;

parents are the most important models for literacy. 6. Literacy stages through which a child progresses should be considered flexible and not subject to strict "scope and sequence" (p. xviii).

Every child enters preschool with a language background. It is critical that teachers and/or childcare providers recognize the uniqueness of that background and be skilled in developing it to the child's supreme advantage. "We are in a period during which unparalleled attention is being given to studying what Yetta Goodman (1980) has called the roots of literacy" (Teale & Sulzby, 1986, p. 173). Still in its infancy stage, the field of emergent literacy is infinitely complex. In their data gathering, a number of researchers have relied heavily on naturalistic inquiry, a process which utilizes the qualitative methods of observation, interview, and documentary analysis. While engaged in that type of process, researchers note existing literacy-related practices in the home to see how they connect to a child's reading and writing activities. It is essential that teachers and childcare providers know how to build on children's inherent language experiences rather than overlook them or consider them nonexistent. In a study by Spradley (1980) in-home observers took detailed field notes whenever a child or anyone else in the child's environment ". . . looked at a book, wrote a note, signed his or her name, 'scribbled,' or was otherwise engaged with written language" (cited in Teale & Sulzby, 1986, p. 177).

Realizing that early childhood educators have long been aware that "children's language and literacy development is interwoven and

continuous from infancy onward" (p. viii), Strickland & Morrow (1989) acknowledge, "It is very exciting that researchers in various disciplines have recently confirmed the integrated 'birth on' approach long intuitively known by many fine educators" (p. viii). In accordance with that perspective, home and community settings are now seen as crucial nurturing environments for the fostering and development of literacy. Researchers are going beyond their laboratories for a more comprehensive view of the process. Literacy is seen as a "complex sociopsycholinguistic activity" (p. 2).

Clay (1977) explains that children who have difficulty in reading after they enter school may trace their deficiencies back to improper preparation at home in the early years. Their homes may have been devoid of the types of experiences necessary to promote literacy. Limited language skills can be the result of homes where there are few opportunities for adult/child conversations and where there is no sharing of books. In essence, ". . . the child who has not learned that books contain interesting ideas, and that the language which he listens to is related in some way to the story in the book, has missed some valuable learning exerience" (p. 11). With a similar message, Isenberg & Jacobs (1982) place a high degree of emphasis on meaningful daily conversations between parent and child. "Children need the stimulation of adult language and ideas" (p. 19).

In a study of parental influences on reading (1978) Ninio & Bruner report ". . . parental reading to the child can stimulate imagination and help the child understand written words long before recognizing

them. It supports or scaffolds the labelling of objects and has a strong potential for language development" (p. 816). Visual literacy is discussed by Lindauer (1988) in her analysis of "wordless" books indicating their significant link with creativity as well as with the preparatory reading process in which children develop physical skills leading to reading coordination. Even illiterate parents can use such colorful, imaginative books for high literacy yields.

Greaney (1986) recognizes the powerful role that parents and teachers play in grooming a child for literacy. He notes that in the early years picture books are an important ingredient in language development. From then on, there is a progression of meaningful steps.

> It is the task of parents and the school to help make encounters with print satisfying and pleasurable, thereby introducing the young person to a new world of adventure and ideas which can both illuminate and change his or her future life. (p. 817)

Literacy ramifications for kindergarteners are linked with the important early childhood years as well. Addressing the topic of "emergent literacy," Pikulski (1988) points out the need for kindergarteners to experience successful encounters with print. He also contrasts the term emergent literacy with reading readiness, stressing the importance of ongoing environmental literacy-related activities. Juliebo (1985) in a study of kindergarten-age children remarks that literacy growth depends more on appropriate in-home reading experiences than it does upon teacher-child interaction. With respect to full-day

kindergarten programs, Elkind (1987) cautions against the "relentless push of curricula from the higher levels into the lower levels" (p. 2). He advocates a time each day for quiet activities and listening to a story. McCuen (1988) asserts his conviction that preschoolers and kindergarteners be given the proper opportunities to grasp language through imaginative teaching methods. He envisions school settings where as part of their daily routine children speak, listen to stories from quality children's literature, ". . . hear a rich array of words. . ." and ". . . write from the beginning of their schooling . . ." (p. 122).

Many preschool facilities offer programs so structured that they have rendered creativity an endangered child attribute. The Early Childhood and Literacy Development Committee of the International Reading Association (1986) lists the following problems: Rigid programs may offer unsuitable experiences and hold up unrealistic expectations for children of that age level. Accelerated programs force undue pressures on many children so that they fail to become intellectual risk takers; as a consequence, they may lack motivation or courage to experiment with the intricacies of language development. Language deficits may be the result. By not allowing time for pleasure reading, such programs often foster negative feelings toward reading. Children should be viewing reading as a source of enjoyment so that they will experience a natural enhancement of their curiosity, critical thinking, and creative expression.

Emphasizing that children are endowed with imaginative powers from birth, Egan (1985) stresses the importance of enriching early childhood academics with stimulating, challenging curricula that can serve to produce a child's fulfillment, "What cannot be directly tied to some simple content within the child's immediate experience has been increasingly forced out of the early school curriculum. We are treating young children as fools" (p. 165). Egan states that a disservice has been done to Piaget by way of excluding that portion of his work that dealt with the imagination. Fantasy stories are a beginning; their application, however, extends to history, mathematics, science, and beyond. "Imagination must not continue to be a neglected tool of learning" (p. 166).

In a study of 75 preschool children and beginning kindergarten children ages 3 to 5 from low and middle socioeconomic groups Harlin & Lipa (1987) found that younger children:

> rely on the interrelatedness of speaking, reading and writing for communication, and that older children may lose focus of the communicative aspect of written language, especially in school related tasks. Results also suggest that emergent literacy experiences that are initiated by the child may be more "meaningful and relevant" to experiencing literacy than are school imposed reading and writing tasks and that intentional messages constructed by the child may provide the cognitive basis for understanding the interrelatedness of oral and written language. (ED285142, Abstract)

Rowe (1987) employing 21 preschoolers (ages 3 and 4) as authors examined what sociopsychological strategies were used in a classroom of faculty and staff children at Indiana University where youngsters directed their own literacy learning. The children wrote stories alone or co-authored them with classmates and/or a teacher. Collaboration and social interaction throughout the process was essential to their emerging literacy. "Extensive observation and analysis indicated that conversation played a crucial role in constructing literacy concepts. This systematic relationship between conversation and demonstration allowed children to learn about literacy, while writing their own texts inspired them to develop personal perspectives."

After conducting an extensive study of literacy among families, Taylor (1983) wrote ". . . children learn of the multiplicity of literate activities as they learn of different social practices . . . . Print in various forms is embedded in the social practices that the children explored" (p. 54). Her study included low income families as well as middle and upper middle class families. Even in families living below the poverty level, the researcher observed homes filled with print and found children learning to read and write.

The Maryland State Department of Education (1983) has developed an early childhood model parenting program offering detailed ways in which administrators and educators can involve and organize the home and community to benefit the young child. The use of volunteers is incorporated into the plan. Since her work with the Head Start parent involvement component in 1964 Greenberg (1989) has made parent

participation a major focus of her life's work. She addresses the need for schools to work effectively with parents stating that, "Nationwide, there are only a handful of schools that exemplify maximum feasible parent participation or even approach significant levels of involvement. It's up to us to brainstorm more ways to include parents more meaningfully, and to examine problems preventing greater family involvement in our schools" (p. 74). Morgan (1989) advises childcare providers and teachers on the importance of establishing relationships with parents that foster warmth and trust.

Friedberg (1989) has developed a community project involving parents, preschoolers, and books. Entitled Beginning With Books, the program is delivered through well-baby clinics in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania under the auspices of the Allegheny County Health Department. Social service workers experienced in counseling and skilled in developing a trusting rapport, talk to parents about the benefits of reading aloud to their children. Workers read to the children and give each family a packet of four books to take home. As a side effect, it was revealed that ". . . at least six people in addition to the target child enjoyed each packet of books -- parents, grandparents, siblings, other relatives, and friends" (pp. 14 - 15). Now affiliated with the Carnegie Public Library, the program includes 14 participating agencies. Another facet of the program is literacy tutoring of parents or grandparents. Case workers often read to children while their caregivers are being tutored.

Trelease (1985), a read-aloud advocate, urges that parents develop the habit of reading to their children at infancy. He refers to Dr. T. Berry Brazelton's statement that "the most critical task" (p. 15) of new parents is the calming of their child so that he/she is receptive for listening to parent messages. Trelease reminds his readers of the soothing effects of the human voice and emphasizes how a rhythmic reading voice could ensure peacefulness and security in a child's world. In an ongoing effort to foster literacy experiences, Trelease describes rewards for children and parents in the setting up of home libraries. He views the world of literature as a storehouse of expression from which a child takes what he/she hears, internalizes it, practices it, and becomes literate. Home libraries, furthermore, lead to the discovery of public libraries and a new realm of treasures.

> As important and convenient as a home library is, it cannot replace a public library. The home library should act as an appetizer, stimulating the child's taste for the vast riches offered by the free public library. It is a town's or city's most important cultural and intellectual asset. (p. 83)

Interest and apprehension about the process and problems of literacy development are mounting in a society where increasing numbers of children must attend daycare full time. Dzama & Gilstrap (1987) conducted interviews with preschool directors, teachers, and head librarians on the subject of promoting literacy. Evidence indicated that parents did not avail themselves of public libraries. Daycare

directors reported that books were provided for children at childcare centers, but none of the centers had a library or a significant collection of library books.

In a study of preschool classrooms observing children's free play and literature-related experiences, Morrow (1982) found positive correlations between literacy development, a teacher's encouragement of literary experiences, and the physical design of library corners. Many preschools are lacking those reading/nurturing components.

Rogers & Herrin (1986) in an analysis of alternatives to preschool story hours emphasized the concept of parent-child learning centers and an expansion of library services in connection with the community's changing needs. To make certain that individual children and groups of children would be offered equal access to library programs, Oeljen et al (1986) worked with a task force of a county library system to keep childcare providers informed about available services. They also sought to increase cooperation with school discricts.

Smith-Lawrence & Gary (1980) designed a reading program for children in conjunction with a public library setting using volunteers and a program coordinator. They emphasized successful early reading experiences for children and ways to make parents aware of their own importance in that reading process. Material on how to conduct discussions was included as part of their packet.

Concerned about reaching children in the "critical preschool years" (p. 19) and convinced that reading is essential to the quality of ones life, MacCarry (1989) aims to ward off problems which afflict those

numbered among the illiterate. "Nonreaders . . . may become severely handicapped in adolescence and adult years. They will have . . . less life satisfaction. Often they feel isolated and alienated from society; some become serious problems to themselves and their communities" (p. 18). With her innovative program she directly involved herself and her storytelling expertise with a pilot project in Lee County, Florida which effected a collaboration of the county library system and seven childcare centers. She outlines detailed ways in which teachers, parents, and community could contribute to literacy development.

In writing of the widespread establishment of preschool programs as a permanent part of the education system of the future, Bloom (1981) poses serious questions as to which educational goals and values will take priority. He believes it is a mistake for educators to use those years in an effort to give children from any culture a headstart on the three "Rs". He insists that the early childhood years should be set aside for "learning to learn" rather than focusing on specific academic skills. Bloom emphasizes that in the crucial years of childhood, the child's social and emotional development is of prime importance.

Honig (1986) points out the necessity of caregivers' being in tune with youngsters' social and emotional needs in order to "nurture the roots of intellectual competence" (p. 5). She highlights the importance of language mastery activities and advocated daily reading experiences, "Caregivers need to read books in a leisurely, involved fashion on a daily basis with young children. This frequent reading correlates with

later intellectual zestfulness, rich language skills, and child success at school entry" (Swan & Stavros, 1973, cited in Honig, 1989, p. 6).

Preschool activities should abound in opportunities for developing a child's emerging literacy. On a larger scale, cooperation between home and school works for the child's optimum enrichment. Research demonstrates that ". . . many of the home environment processes can be altered by parents if they choose to do so and that the effects . . . are very great" (Brofenbrenner, 1974, cited in Bloom, 1981, p. 2).

Most children in preschool programs do not receive sufficient daily individual reading/nurturing time needed to lay a strong foundation for literacy. Parents have the responsibility to work with schools and preschools to make the difference. Former superintendent of Chicago schools, Ruth Love, has challenged, "If we would get our parents to read to their preschool children fifteen minutes a day, we could revolutionize the schools" (cited in Trelease, 1985, p. xi).

In conclusion, it is evident that emerging literacy, is a complex, multifaceted process whereby children become literate and attain social, emotional, and intellectual rewards according to their degree of literacy enlightenment. Acutely aware of ". . . all the money, time energy and ingenuity we have spent on reading research" (p. 1), Meek (1983) nevertheless notes with certainty that, ". . . we are still at the stage of saying that children learn to read when there is something they want to read and an adult who takes the time and trouble to help them" (p. 1).

CHAPTER III

ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES AND EVALUATION INSTRUMENTS

Goals and Expectations

General goals of the practicum were to address literacy development needs of preschoolers attending a weekly fulltime daycare facility. The first goal sought to ensure that books and literacy exeriences become more available for the children on site at the preschool. The second goal centered around increasing individualized reading/nurturing time for children in their homes by providing families with opportunities for shared reading experiences. A third goal aimed toward involving the community in assisting with the preschoolers' literacy development. The writer hoped and expected that at the end of the practicum process all persons participating in the project would reveal their eagerness to create and support productive literacy-related activities in the lives of the children on a continuing basis. Through a cooperative effort of home, preschool, and community each child could look forward to a lifetime of reading pleasure moving up the "ladder of literacy" prepared to be a contributing citizen of society as a critical thinker and a creative problem solver.

Behavioral Objectives and Measurements

The writer employed both qualitative and quantitative measurements in assessing the following specific behavioral objectives of the practicum which were written as follows:

OBJECTIVE 1. Over a period of eight months, the writer will strive to increase the existing number of books at the preschool from 55 books to 650 books as an initial step in the establishment of an onsite preschool library collection. Reserving 650 books as a minimum total figure would guarantee 10 books per child.

OBJECTIVE 2. Over a period of eight months, the writer will gain support of three to five community groups in providing donations of books, or money toward the purchase of books for the purpose of establishing an onsite preschool library collection.

OBJECTIVE 3. Over a period of eight months, the writer will work to establish a liaison between one public library system and the preschool whereby the public library will donate a minimum of 25 books every six months to the preschool's library collection.

OBJECTIVE 4. Over a period of eight months, the writer will promote an increase of weekly book checkouts from the preschool library by parent/child from 0 books to 2 books per week; the total number of books checked out will increase from 0 books to 130 books per week.

OBJECTIVE 5. Over a period of eight months, the writer will promote in-home parent/child shared reading experiences of 15 minutes per day for 100% of the preschool population. Of those who responded to

a pre-practicum questionnaire, 32% of parents report that they read to their child at home 15 minutes per day (APPENDIX A).

OBJECTIVE 6. Over a period of eight months, the writer will increase the number of volunteer "guest readers" at the preschool from 0 volunteers to 2 volunteers, one day per week; the number of volunteer reading hours will be increased from 0 hours to 1½ hours per reader per week: a total of 3 hours, one day per week.

Method of Analyzing Results

At the end of the eighth-month practicum implementation, the writer conducted a thorough analysis of the mechanisms of the practicum process in regard to form and content and supported her findings with both qualitative and quantitative data for each objective. Firestone (1987) asserts that the two types of analyses can be complementary, and often one type will serve as an excellent corroboration for the other. Chapter V reports results wherein "before" and "after" comparisons can be noted. The precise strategies for analysis and measurement are presented below in the language in which they were stated prior to practicum implementation:

1. For the first measurable objective, the writer will make up an inventory of additional books and perform a simple tabulation of numbers to determine if the objective has been achieved. If so, that number will total 595 books. Qualitative data about the methods employed to obtain the books will be documented in the event the practicum

could be used as a model. Strengths or weaknesses will be recorded.

2. For the second measurable objective, the writer will also include both qualitative and quantitative analyses. In addition to counting the number of community groups who become involved with the program, she hopes to establish rapport with those groups and document their rate of involvement channeling their enthusiasm toward future preschool projects so that they can be "counted" on again for support in an ongoing campaign of literacy-related goals. The writer will keep a log of qualitative behavioral observations as the practicum unfolds.

3. For the third measurable objective, the writer will tally up the number of books donated and work up an agreement that will record the intention of the library system to make the cooperative effort a continuing one, noting qualitative data how the process might be simplified or improved.

4. For the fourth measurable objective, the writer will keep accurate quantitative data recording the weekly total number of books checked out from the preschool library as well as the total number of books checked out by individual families. The writer will keep a log of qualitative data describing attitudes of the children and families indicating their degree of enthusiasm for the program.

5. For the fifth measurable objective, the writer will tabulate and compare pre and post-practicum questionnaire responses to the question, "How often do you read with your child (children) at home?"

Qualitative data will be recorded as the writer observes the practicum in process and notes possible parent/child attit changes.

6. For the sixth measurable objective, the writer will report as to whether volunteer "guest readers" were incorporated into the preschool program on a once/week basis. Qualitative data will serve to note reactions to the visits from the viewpoints of volunteers, preschool personnel, and the children themselves. The writer will analyze the practice of using volunteers at the preschool to determine the desirability of maintaining such a program and if necessary suggestions for improving it.

Firestone (1987) refers to ". . . rich depiction . . ." as the ". . . hallmark of most qualitative research . . ." (p. 19)). In this type of analysis, descriptions and quotations are frequently used to offer insightful perspectives on the participants in addition to detailed reporting of the ". . . multiple realities . . ." (p.16) that make up the practicum process.

Mechanism for Recording Unexpected Events

Throughout the eight-month practicum duration, the writer maintained a log as documentation of all qualitative data related to the implementation process. A significant segment of the project involved observations of behavior and attitude on the part of parents, children, preschool personnel, and community volunteers. Unexpected events were noted accordingly and will be addressed in Chapter V.

CHAPTER IV

SOLUTION STRATEGY

Discussion and Evaluation of Possible Solutions

As the problem was identified in Chapter II, preschoolers attending a weekly fulltime daycare program needed more exposure to children's literature in order for their literacy development to be properly nourished. Literacy on its lowest level of meaning implies ability to read and write; on its highest level it connotes an enlightenment based on the attainment of knowledge and an ability to engage in abstract thought. The writer's ultimate goal for the preschool children in the practicum project is the attainment of literacy in its highest form. A search for possible solutions to the problem outlined includes that concept as part of a greater vision along with practical steps leading toward fulfillment of more immediate goals and specific objectives.

Recent research and ongoing education programs related to literacy development point to the importance of early childhood literacy experiences nurtured from infancy in home and preschool settings. Theory and practice must unite to form a curriculum embracing both affective and cognitive domains. As a review, Trelease (1985) advocates reading aloud to children from birth on and cites the calming effects of the human voice. Egan (1985), Singer & Singer (1985), Strickland & Morrow (1989), describe a world of riches and delights for children who are benefactors of imaginative activities associated with reading. Researchers Teale & Sulzby (1986) and Pikulski (1988) distinguish between the terminology and concepts of emergent literacy and reading readiness. Clay (1977) emphasizes in general the importance of home and community settings as crucial to the spawning of literacy, and along with

Isenberg & Jacobs (1982) specifically stresses the importance of parent/child conversations as central to the development of a child's language. The Early Childhood and Literacy Development Committee of the International Reading Association (1986) strongly promotes creative preschool reading programs devoid of rigid structure as do Elkin (1987) and McCuen (1988).

Introductory reading for young children can be initiated by "wordless" books or picture books which Greaney (1986) and Lindauer (1988) consider important links with creativity. Parents and caregivers can use such books to develop a child's verbal skills and cultivate imagination. Illiterate parents can be shown how they can "read" to and communicate with their children through those books, increase their own self esteem, and prevent an intergenerational cycle of illiteracy.

Harlin & Lipa (1987) and Rowe (1987) assert that literacy experiences initiated by children themselves have more value than school imposed reading and writing assignments. Additionally, they documented their observations of the interrelatedness of speaking, reading, and writing as part of the whole process of becoming literate. The latter, studying children in the role of authors and coauthors, observed sociopsychological strategies in a preschool classroom and recognized the importance of children's conversation with one another.

Children's social and emotional needs are emphasized by Bloom (1981) and Honig (1986) who are convinced that healthy early nurturing experiences are a crucial first phase of appropriate intellectual development. To ensure that families become aware of proper ways to nourish and educate their young, the Maryland State Department of Education (1983),

Greenberg (1989), and Morgan (1989) address the importance of parent participation programs and the need for educators and childcare providers to become more creative in forming productive relationships with parents.

Numbered among researchers and practitioners who observed or initiated library programs for preschoolers are Smith-Lawrence & Gary (1980), Oeljen et al (1986), Rogers & Herrin (1986), Dzama & Gilstrap (1987), and Friedberg (1989). Trelease (1985) who refers to libraries as "delivery rooms for ideas" (p. 92), praises efforts of public libraries in Orlando, Florida; Cleveland, Ohio; and Harrisburg, Pennsylvania for reaching out to newborn infants and their families through area hospitals by supplying them packets of information on library programs and by emphasizing the importance of parent/child literacy experiences in the early childhood years.

MacCarry (1989) connected a public library system with seven childcare centers. She provides a six-step strategy that could be incorporated into any preschool library program:

1. Children would be taught about the care of books.
2. Children would learn about libraries from childcare providers or teachers and be introduced to the library card and its significance.
3. Children would learn how to browse and select books.
4. Children would read to each other.
5. Children would learn how to borrow books and keep them in a safe place within the preschool before taking them from the premises.

6. Children would be permitted to take a book home for overnight at first and then later for a weekend. Parents would receive a note about the opportunity; they would sign the library card along with their child and be encouraged to enjoy reading and storytelling time at home as a family.

Teale & Martinez (1988) reassert essential concepts about the teaching of reading to youngsters:

> Repeatedly reading the same good stories to young children, adding additional books as we go along, is "teaching reading." (p. 12)
> Creating an appealing library area in the classroom and offering children lots of time to browse in it daily is "teaching reading."
> Encouraging each child to "read" to another frequently (whether or not the child "knows how to read") is "teaching reading." (p. 13)
> Encouraging lively conversation about the story during reading times is "teaching reading." (p. 14)

This writer values the research findings and examples of innovative educational programs she has outlined. In her own solution strategy, it is evident to see where she incorporated the ideas of several researchers or practitioners. Teale (1986) sees a need for conducting longitudinal studies for continued data gathering in an effort to explore further the relationship between literacy development and home background. Schorr (1988) commenting in general on the amount of existing knowledge from studies covering infancy through adulthood, takes another view, ". . . I was astonished to find how much we knew. And I was dismayed at how little of this knowledge was being utilized to change the prospects for the children growing up in the shadows, the children most at risk" (cited in

White, p. 66). Noting the usefulness of demonstration programs, she sees them as ". . . beginning points of thought" (cited in White, p. 69) as to how the larger system can undergo the urgent changes needed. She emphasizes the need for ". . . devising a variety of replication strategies" (cited in White, p. 69). The writer hopes the strategy she devised for the implementation of her practicum will produce everlasting literacy rewards in children and families of the preschool population and serve as a community model for programs of the future.

Description and Justification for Solution Selected

Combining ideas from the research with ideas of her own, the writer formulated a plan optimally workable in the preschool setting. Recognizing the need for a library of children's literature at the childcare facility, the writer first investigated the possibility of initiating a liaison between the preschool and the county library system in the hope that her one pilot project might eventually lead to a large-scale library connection (similar to MacCarry's) with several daycare centers throughout the county. The director of the library system discussed the matter with the coordinator of children's library services and reported back to the writer that he would not be able to set up a program unless he could replicate it, and at that time replication was not feasible; the coordinator of children's services, however, indicated that the library might be able to work out a limited arrangement with the preschool at a later date.

As an alternative, therefore, the writer chose to solicit community support for an independent lending library at the preschool which would be used to nurture literacy development in the children through a parent involvement program. The following account is the perception and

anticipation of the writer/practitioner as to how the solution would correlate with the practicum objectives. It is important to note that this language is PREIMPLEMENTATION before she knew precisely how or if, in fact, her ideas would be put into practice. The reality of the practicum process will be emphasized in Chapter IV, Report of Action Taken, and in Chapter V.

Objective 1 deals with increasing the number of books at the preschool by 595 books. In a needs assessment interview, the director told the writer that she would like to set a goal of 10 books per child; for 65 children this would mean a total of 650 books on hand. This figure is in line with the recommendation of Huck (1976) who believes it is important to have ". . . five to eight books per child in a classroom library" (cited in Strickland & Morrow, 1989, p. 127). In her 1988 practicum minilibrary project she brought 125 grant-earned books with her to a preschool on a temporary basis. After a while, she found herself checking out boxes of books from the public library on her own library card in order to keep a fresh supply of books circulating. To maintain interest in the book collection, Strickland & Morrow (1989) advise, "Approximately twenty-five new books should be introduced every two weeks, replacing twenty-five that have been there for a while. With recirculation, "old" books are greeted as new friends a few months later" (p. 128).

Using $10.00 as the average cost per book, a sum of $5,950.00 would be needed to purchase new books. The writer intends, however, to accept donations of well-cared for used books and does not anticipate a problem of reaching the goal. Once the community becomes involved with this project, there is a possibility that the preschool will be inundated with books. Should that be the case, the writer is prepared to accept them in a small

nearly vacant utility building on the grounds of the preschool where they could be sorted and labelled with color codes by board members and/or community volunteers. "Color coding introduces children to the idea that books in libraries are organized by a system that makes them readily accessible" (Strickland & Morrow, 1989, p. 127). A "subobjective " of Objective 1 would be to support the books with bookshelves. New and/or used bookshelves will be erected at the preschool in accordance with need. Several of the preschoolers' fathers are in the construction industry; they could easily build bookcases with donated lumber in a few hours on a Saturday morning. Thrift shops are another source of bookcases; they could be purchased with donations if necessary. Strickland & Morrow (1989) point out the desirability of having two types of bookshelves: a) the standard variety in which the spines of the books face outward, and b) the open-faced type necessary for diplaying books. The board of the preschool willingly rallies to support its needs; this type of project would be welcomed by them.

Objective 2 deals with gaining support from three to five community groups in providing donations of new and/or used books or money toward the purchase of books. The writer has targeted a) several churches of different denominations known for their active women's groups pledged to support community service projects and b) three community organizations known for their consistent philanthropic efforts: the Elks, Kiwanis, and Rotary associations. Again, the figure of $10.00 will be used as the average price of a new book. The writer will make presentations before the groups and distribute a written promotion about the program (APPENDIX B). The writer intends to gain general community support from newspaper

publicity about the project which she will give to three columnists with whom she is personally acquainted.

Objective 3 deals with the formation of a liaison between one public library system and the preschool. The writer will again approach the county library system to see if an arrangement can be made whereby the library would donate a minimum of 25 books every six months to the preschool's library collection. This would be a simpler, more limited arrangement than the one which the writer had originally envisioned, and it would not call for complex replication strategies.

Objective 4 deals with the checking out of books. The writer will work with the director and her staff to make the checkout process as simple and efficient as possible. A convenient method will be set up so that parent and child can sign for the books together. A special library card with the preschool's logo will be designed and distributed to each family. In a pre-practicum survey, parents expressed great interest in having a library program at the preschool. MacCarry's six-step strategy could be employed in conjunction with this objective.

Objective 5 deals with enlisting 100% participation from parents in reading to their child for 15 minutes each day. The goal of striving for 100% is a lofty one, but the writer chooses to aim high in this regard and will be anxious to analyze the results. The parents at the preschool are eager to please the director who is a strong matriarchal figure in the community. They are well aware of the long waiting list for placement and

feel most fortunate that their children are securely enrolled in the program. The director's influence will be highly significant in achieving this objective.

Objective 6 deals with securing two "guest readers" for one day per week. The director indicated this arrangement as her preference. She would like one reader to nurture the 2 and 3-year-old group and another to give attention to the 4-year-olds. The writer foresees no problem in fulfilling this objective once the publicity for the project becomes effective.

PREPRACTICUM, the writer stated that she was looking forward to carrying out and achieving the objectives of the practicum as outlined. She indicated her hopes that the library would become a permanent one continuing to flourish as long as the preschool is in existence. She believed that the project with its fascinating tour of children's literature would render excitement for all persons involved and that the wondrous adventure into literacy being offered would especially enrich the lives of the children and families for whom it was designed. Recognizing immediate demands for social change, psychologist White (1988) urges the "need to find one way to merge the knowledge and wisdom of policymakers, professionals, and researchers in the formation of policies for children" (p. 70). It is incumbent upon us as transformational change agents to accomplish that task.

Report of Action Taken

The following is an account of the major steps taken to implement the practicum. It will be apparent where the action plan was modified to

accommodate extenuating circumstances or to maintain flexibility amid a host of group dynamics.

Three years ago the writer's idea for a theme won first place in Nova University's poster contest sponsored by the department of Early/Middle Childhood. It was the original intent of the university to match that idea with an artist's illustration and disseminate it to Nova students. Limited funds prevented the project's reaching fruition. For the culmination of her doctoral degree program, the writer decided to use that theme's central message as the hallmark of her second practicum. In a simple way, it symbolizes the profound studies of researchers on the topic of literacy and outwardly reiterates the writer's internal joy of working in the field. Appropriately, it captures the essence of her mission at the preschool: LITERACY AND LOVE GO HAND IN HAND: We Read to Our Children Each Day.

At the outset, the writer scheduled with the preschool director a block of uninterrupted time wherein they could meet and share in a leisurely way their childrearing philosophies, their common interest in literacy development, and the practical guidelines which would of necessity envelop the practicum forming its framework. The writer had been acting as a board member of the preschool for five months before the actual onset of the practicum. She had sat in on board meetings and visited the preschool on a number of occasions; however, because of the director's schedule she had not previously had the opportunity to talk with the director at length. At their extended meeting the director shared with the writer verbally and visually the school's origin and history while perusing together the preschool's scrapbook dating back to 1963. The writer learned how the

preschool began its existence as a community effort and how it has continually been the recipient of funds from the private sector. Its private, nonprofit status makes it unique in the entire northern end of the county where there exist several strictly private, profit-making preschools and one government-funded operation, that of Project Headstart. The writer recalls that when she first moved to the community, the preschool was more visible in the local newspaper, and volunteers seemed to be more involved on a weekly basis. She hoped to revive some of that community interest at the local level. At the county level, United Way has ranked the facility Number 1 of the preschools under its sponsorship. The writer outlined her practicum objectives with the preschool director who was receptive to all of them. She made known her intention to check with the director for approval of program promotions or strategies before disseminating or implementing them. The writer did not want her presence to interfere in any way with the smooth-running operation of the childcare facility.

In October, while working on her proposal, the writer, along with the director, decided it would be opportune to invite Barbara Bush to visit the preschool during the holiday season. They felt she might be visiting her mother-in-law who lives only a short distance away and that her presence would be a great boon to their literacy program (APPENDIX C). Mrs. Bush was unable to make the trip; her regretful reply is enclosed. (APPENDIX D). When the literacy model is fully in place, the preschool will invite President Bush to survey the scene. If he truly wishes to wipe out illiteracy in "eight years" as he has stated, he needs to ensure that programs like the practicum model are designed, funded, and, implemented in preschools throughout the nation. His political philosophy indicates

approval of the strong role the private sector has played in developing this model.

Official implementation of the practicum began just after Thanksgiving. An auspicious beginning signalled the ultimate success of the project. The writer considered attempting to muster Yule tide-spirited support for the preschool from several local churches but realized that most church and community organizations had formalized Christmas project commitments several months earlier. She was fortunate, however, in being permitted to place a notice about the literacy project in the bulletin of the church she regularly attends. That notice coupled with the support of an influential women's guild chairperson captured the parishioners' holiday generosity as a stimulus and netted 275 books over a period of 3 months. The writer began to code and classify the books immediately so that the children would have access to them. As a short term measure, a few boxes of books were brought over to the preschool for general daily use, and a simple signup log was set up for book checkout by parents; however, that step was not to be considered as the "official" launching of the literacy program. Later, circumstances dictated that the complete initiation package would be postponed for several months until all facets of the project could be properly put in place.

An offshoot of that church's involvement came in the form of a phone call from the guild chairperson's daughter, a young married woman holding an Educational Specialist degree in school psychology. On maternity leave from her job with the public school system, the mother of two children under the age of three offerred to assist with the literacy project in any way that she could. She had been acquainted with the preschool's director and had previously assisted her by arranging transportation to special

services for children having speech and hearing deficits. The writer recognized the woman as an excellent candidate for membership on the preschool's board of directors and promptly extended her an invitation to join. (The preschool board chairman had previously authorized the writer to seek out energetic new members.) Delighted to find an outlet for her professional abilities while raising her children, the psychologist accepted the invitation enthusiastically. At preschool board meetings she has since proposed writing a grant for the preschool in connection with the Children's Services Council, agreed to solicit book stores for library contributions, and more specifically, pledged to assist the writer/practitioner locate children's books featuring characters and subject matter relating to diverse ethnic backgrounds and cultures. The writer has established that goal as a postpracticum priority once all books have been catalogued and a needs assessment revised.

In the new year, the writer mailed informational promotion letters to 25 additional churches in the same town soliciting support for the library program (APPENDIX E). Along with the letter she included a brief notice suitable for church bulletins. In direct response to that mailing, one well-intentioned male churchgoer reported to the preschool with one lone children's book promulgating religious doctrine. The preschool director who had been the recipient of the book was assured by the writer/practitioner that she had not been soliciting religious books from the churches and that the bulletin notices had been specific as to what types of books were desired. In the bulletins, the writer's phone number became a "Book Hotline" contact number. No calls were received until late spring when two calls bought in lucrative contributions in the form of cash and new books. No other church nor individual church member responded to

the notices until summer when one church used the appeal as a Vacation Bible School project wherein children brought in their own books from home in an effort of cooperative community assistance. A church representative unexpectedly arrived at the preschool with 205 used childen's books in excellent condition. (No religious books were among them.) A delayed reaction, to be sure; closure had taken from January until June, but both preschool director and writer were gratified by the spirit and volume of the contribution.

One month into the practicum, the writer decided to contact newspapers about publicity for the literacy program in order to maximize book collection. She wrote a promotional piece (APPENDIX F) and arranged to meet with editors to discuss the project. The city newspaper had designated a literacy coordinator on staff whom the writer spoke with over the phone and to whom she mailed the material. For a personal interview, however, she was referred to an education editor who handles northern county news. The writer envisioned an ethereal Valentine's Day feature emphasizing her theme for the program, "Literacy and Love Go Hand in Hand." She had to settle for a more mundane February 15th version, describing the writer's home and garage as a book depository. On the plus side, the positioning of the article was in an attention-getting spot at the top of a page under the headline, "SCHOOLS"; the article was allotted four columns and included an excellent picture of 2 teachers and 10 prechoolers in a reading setting. All in all, the article occupied space equivalent to 9" x 12" and provided fine coverage of the project.

A second article, also of good size, appeared in a local newspaper and included in addition to the name of the preschool a phone number should people need further information or wish to indicate if they had books in

their possession for pickup. A smaller but detailed article praising the project appeared in a another local newspaper. Preschool personnel were pleased with all of the articles; the writer's friends and coworkers commented favorably on the project as referenced from the publicity; however, no phone calls were received in response, and not one book was directly brought in as a result of newspaper coverage. Nevertheless, the newspaper articles served a valuable function and their impact was significant. The articles were inspirational to preschool workers and to parents, one means of getting them "psyched up" for the reading program. The writer ran off copies of the articles and sent them home with parents. They liked the idea that the preschool had been featured in the newspaper and that they were to be a part of a special project. The director of the preschool posted the newspaper articles on her bulletin board in full view of visiting benefactors or persons serving in a supervisory capacity. As she traveled around town on errands, the writer observed community awareness about her program from people she met. Several acquaintances told the writer they had enjoyed reading about the program in the newspaper and would be glad to help by looking for books at garage sales and flea markets. Moreover, the articles added an air of importance and credibility to the literacy project. The writer began to include copies of them with all of her promotional material.

The first formal objective of the practicum, that of procuring books for the minilibrary, was heavily interdependent on the second formal objective, that of eliciting community support to provide those books. The writer attempted a variety of strategies to obtain the books, some more complex than others; some less productive or not immediately productive; some highly rewarding. She always expressed delight even at the smallest

contribution. Her visits to two thrift shops demonstrate the extremes. One quest at a store where the writer has done much business over the past 16 years resulted in a grand total of two books. A more successful attempt occurred at a community thrift store to which the writer had been recently referred by a friend who had frequently seen children's books there in good supply. Before the writer located the books, she had thought she might purchase them, but when she observed the prices, she decided they were too expensive, at least to buy in bulk. Using a supermarket-type carriage available for store purchases, the writer proceeded to fill up the vehicle with books. She then asked a salesperson about the possibility of having the books donated to the preschool. A negative response was returned. Smiling pleasantly, the writer asked if there was a manager with whom she might discuss the matter. The manager also denied the request. Persistent and still pleasant, the writer inquired if there was anyone else with whom she might negotiate a transaction. Another manager appeared. The writer learned that there was an absentee owner of the store who ran the operation from another city 200 miles away. By this time, the writer/practitioner realized that she was not dealing with a charitable organization but a private, profit-making enterprise. After listening patiently, the second manager eventally agreed to call his boss about a donation. The writer left her card and a tax receipt form and said that she would return in a few hours. Upon her return, she was told that she could take the entire contents of the carriage. And that was not all -- there was frosting on the cake: Manager number two "threw in" with the deal a six-foot high, four-sided rotating pegboard on a tripod stand which the writer spotted adjacent to the bookcase where she had retrieved the literature. It appeared as if it had been once used for a means of display, but indeed

it was a present day eyesore. The salespeople indicated they were glad to get rid of the cumbersome monstrosity. Unquestionably, the writer knew it would be ideal for library display purposes. The morning had proven fruitful. Most importantly, a thorough book count at her home and an evaluation of the cache revealed 150 delightful children's classics for the preschoolers' library!

Next the writer wrote to three major publishers of children's books. (APPENDIX G). To date, there has been only one response. The publisher offered to sell books to the preschool at a discount instead of granting any complimentry copies. When the writer is ready to purchase new books with library funds, she will investigate the offer to determine best selections and prices in comparison to other publishing companies.

Fifteen years ago, a young insurance agent, new to town, came knocking at the writer's door. The writer transferred all of her insurance to his company because he proved to her how his plans could be more cost effective for her family's needs. The agent told her that he and his wife had been teachers, both with Masters degrees. He wanted to begin a business of his own and his wife wanted to stay home and raise a family. Since that time, he went on to conduct a very successful insurance operation and became very involved with two service organizations in the community. Moreover, his wife served four years as president of the preschool board. When the writer approached him for assistance with the library, she was confident of his support. In line with her expectations, he gave high praise to the preschool and its director and assured the writer he would be delighted to help. As president of the Exchange Club, he pledged support of that group, and as past president of the Chamber of Commerce, he committed himself to marshalling forces from that group as well. (The writer also made an in-

person visit to the present Chamber president as noted elsewhere in this report.) In particular, the Exchange Club is fond of "hands-on" projects through which members work together as a microcosm of the community actually helping the community. In essence, the insurance agent told the writer that his group would provide shelves for the books once they had been obtained. Chapter V indicates the special task to which the Exchange Club was assigned.

In early summer, the writer phoned, met with, and delivered more promotional packets to several community leaders. Three group representatives who expressed a sincere desire to support the program in the fall when membership numbers would again be at peak are the Kiwanis Club president, who has another role as the husband of the librarian performing the story hours; the Chamber of Commerce president whose sister is working as a volunteer in Connecticut with adult illiterates; and the local president of the American Association of University Women who places educational fundraisers at the top of her organization's agenda.

For the present time, acquisitions to the preschool library are primarily composed of used children's books in excellent or good condition similar to any library whose books are in constant circulation. The books, moderately priced when new, are appropriate for all of the preschoolers in attendance. Cash contributions have amounted to $240.00, and are being retained in a preschool library fund. As additional community support increases and along with it a larger cash flow, the writer can at times be more discriminating and select the finest, more expensive children's literature for the preschoolers. She is particularly anxious to provide books illustrated with the highest quality artwork so that children may be exposed to a world of fanciful illustrations to pique their imaginations.

As noted earlier, she is intent also on locating and providing a wide selection of books depicting children and settings of diverse cultural backgrounds. Cash donations and grants could fill the bill for such acquisitions. In the interim, the writer/practitioner is enormously pleased with the literature selections submitted by the community. An excellent assortment exists in spite of the fact that they were donated at random from a variety of sources. For the initial book drive, the writer believes the method used was most appropriate. Chapter V reports on figure totals and the categorizing process.

There is only one bookstore in town which sells new books. The writer had done business with the owner for two years purchasing classroom novels for her middle school students. In an effort to obtain some new editions for the minilibrary, the writer approached the owner of that store for a donation. She was pleased that he permitted her to select 24 books in categories which she observed a void. He then suggested that she visit his son's newly opened "used" bookstore across town. After acting upon his suggestion, she received several almost new books to add to her collection.

For the implementation of the reading program itself, the writer will use MacCarry's six steps as a starting point. Finding those strategies to be simple, sound, and superbly suited to the preschool routine and her program's goals, she intends to share those ideas with preschool teachers and parents from the outset. For the writer, one of the most important aspects of the project was the designing of the library card. She intends that the card be a vivid representation of parent, child, and preschool unity in the youngsters' emerging literacy process. The writer knew from the beginning that she wanted a card with a picture of the child on it, but

logistics of "who, when, where, and how" took months to coordinate. A local photographer, school photographer, and several people in the film developing business were consulted about taking photos. In the end the writer took the pictures herself with the help of a friend who positioned each child with a stuffed animal and a book sitting on a chair behind which there was background shelving stacked with children's literature. The writer designed the card to look like a book and open up like a book. Each photo is done in vibrant color set on astrobright yellow paper with the entire library card laminated for a professional finish. On the front cover of the card is the child's picture above which is the name of the preschool in bold black letters. Under each picture, the child is introduced with his/her name written in black calligraphy and just below the name, the word READER appears. On the inside of the cover is the theme for the reading program, LITERACY AND LOVE GO HAND IN HAND. The LOGO under the theme makes an unwritten statement about a parent and child reading together. It took the "nonartist" writer seven hours to draw the LOGO. She felt it important that the LOGO be original. She is satisfied that the LOGO captures the essence of the theme and that it is unique. On the opposite inside page, the following affirmative commitment appears: "_____ Preschool Staff & Families Enjoy Reading With Our Children Each Day." Signatures of the director and parent on the same page indicate that they are joined together in a venture of great importance for their children. Under the card number on the back, each child "signs" his/her name. Whether the endorsement be an impressive full name or a distinguished scribble, it is important that each child engage in the signing process, a ritual performed with a reverence for reading and rooted in a legacy of literacy. As a final emphasis at the bottom of the card,

the writer has left the symbolic acronym and indelible imprint of her first practicum, a preschool family reading program through literature, creativity, and PLAY: PARENTS as LITERACY ADVOCATES for YOUNGSTERS. One practicum evolved from the other; they share an identical ideology.

Packaging the program for the preschoolers took thoughtful consideration. First and foremost, the writer/practitioner envisioned the library card as a multipurpose document and tool of the literacy mission. Eye appeal was a central ingredient in leading parents to "buy into" the reading program. Without question, the true attractiveness of the card lies in the striking portraits of beauty and innocence of the youngsters on the cover. Parents expressed great delight over the photographs of their children. Their attachment to the pictures subsequently bonded them with the total endeavor. Many parents preferred the photos to those taken by the school photographer. As an interesting aside, when the writer was picking up photos at the 60-minute photomat, a young woman told her, "My son's photo is in that batch; he is a member of the 4-year-old group at the preschool." She expressed her pleasure at the project and indicated that her friends felt the same way.

The writer devised a method to promote high visibility for the library card in conjunction with easy accessibility and frequent use. She purchased bright-colored, lightweight 3-ring folders equipped to fasten in 8½" x 11" paper for record keeping. Note: A local variety store merchant donated many of the folders. On the inside of each one, she included the following inserts:

1. DAILY/WEEKLY RATING OF FAVORITE BOOKS (APPENDIX H) - The book rating sheet had been designed and used with modifications in two of her previous projects, CHILDREN HELPING CHILDREN and the practicum involving PLAY.

Parents and children rate the books and note their favorite book of the week. A quick, easy instrument to use, it orients readers to critical thinking about their book selections. It provides feedback to the program coordinator as to how much time families are spending on reading and indicates the type of books they enjoy. If used properly, it is a reading awareness instrument for parents, keeping them attuned to their children's reading preferences. It can also foster a closeness between parent and child as they communicate with one another in the reading process. That sheet can be taken home and remain there until it is completed.

2. BOOK CHECKOUT SHEET (APPENDIX I) - Parents write the name/s of book/s taken home along with the date due. The book will be stamped with the due date.

3. COUNT YOUR BOOKS (APPENDIX J) - After families have read 10 books together, the sheet is stamped with, "WE PLAY WITH THE PRO'S."

The writer believes that those three sheets are all that are needed to promote and monitor program objectives. Simplicity is important so that no one becomes enmeshed in a bog of bureaucracy. Busy parents have little time; their record-keeping efforts must not be perceived as a burden. Immediate and ultimate goals of reading pleasure and intellectual enlightenment must not be tainted with weighty evaluation techniques.

On the outside of the folders the writer designed and fastened a see-through plastic pocket. Unable to purchase pockets after combing the county's office supply stores, she invented her own system using and transforming menu covers donated by a colleague of her husband.

The library card slips securely into the folder pocket offering easy access to parent/child. Holes were punched at the top of the folders. All folders are hung on pegboards (donated by another local merchant, also a

preschool board member). A bulletin board notice honors the 65 young library members as OUR _____ PRESCHOOL FAMILY OF READERS and heralds them with the words, "MEET THE PROS'e" (Preschoolers Reading Often). Upon entering the childcare facility, one immediately notices the wide-eyed Pro's Gallery ensconced in their library cards, aglow with the curiosity of life. It is clear that the preschool places a priority on reading!

The system is designed so that when parent and child check out a book, they do it together by walking over to the folder and removing it from the pegboard. After book selection, the parent jots down the name/s of the book/s, the date taken and the date due. The folder is then returned to its place on the pegboard. When books are returned, parents simply note the date. In keeping with its central focus, the library card is kept at the preschool for easy availability. It is held in high esteem and a virtual ceremony occurs whenever parent and child use the card. Throughout the process parent and child become partners in reaping the rewards of reading and in sharing responsibility for returning books.

Two factors which prompted the writer/practitioner to design a number of components for the practicum reading program were a) facilitating the process and b) motivating participants. A brief explanation about each unit is provided in the following text. Each design is also depicted in an appendix as labeled.

1. A CERTIFICATE OF APPRECIATION was designed and created for guest presenters or for people who may have become major contributors (of time or money) to the literacy program. The writer asked the preschool director if she would like to have something of that nature to offer, and she indicated

that there was a need for such a tribute to be prepared (APPENDIX K).

2. The writer wanted the LOGO created to complete the unfinished poster theme of three years earlier as a coming around full cycle with her literacy efforts. By chance, the end product resulted in androgynous figures not easily categorized nor identifiable with any one race. They seem to fit the bill while conveying a message of pleasurable, shared reading experiences between parent and child. In essence, the readers appear to be enjoying themselves. The LOGO has been used with several of the program's creations (APPENDIX L).

3. THE LIBRARY CARD has been described in detail (APPENDIX M).

4. The writer wants families to receive low profile reading incentives. Again, the method is characterized by its simplicity. A CERTIFICATE OF ACHIEVEMENT will be awarded when 20 books have been read. It is important that certificates be delivered on an individual basis, meted out discreetly in a noncompetitive manner. (There will be no charts on walls listing who has read the most books.) Certificates will be laminated. Parents can choose to frame them if they wish (APPENDIX N).

5. A floor plan was designed so that shelves and counters for the library could be installed (APPENDIX O). CHAPTER V reports on details under Unexpected Events.

6. Informational Newsletters based on reviews of the literature on topics of a) PLAY (APPENDIX P) and b) EMERGING LITERACY (APPENDIX Q) were prepared for dissemination to parents. The article on PLAY had been used effectively in connection with the writer's initial practicum.

7. The writer created I'M A PRO in 1989 for her middle school students in the form of a rubber stamp. The entire message read,

"I'M PROud of Myself.

I'M A PRO

Person Reading Often

She designed it with knowledge from research that a person's pride in his/her accomplishments should come from within. As an example, it is preferable for a student to state that he is proud of himself, rather than for his parents to tell him, "I am proud of you." Reading teachers had inquired about using it throughout the county. The writer decided to adapt it for the preschool literacy program combining it with the new LOGO and modifying it to some degree for participants. Buttons were made for the parents with the words,

I'M A PRO

Parent Reading Often (APPENDIX R)

Stickers and bookmarks were made for all of the children with the words,

I'M A PRO

Preschooler Reading Often

Stickers, generally beloved by youngsters, are less hazardous than buttons with their jabbing propensity. She omitted, "I'm PROud of myself" for the sake of simplicity and for space considerations, but the phrase is still germane to the concept (APPENDIX S). The phrase was retained on the bookmarks.

Buttons were made for the older preschoolers with the words,

I'M PROud of Myself

I'M A PRO

Preschooler Reading Often (APPENDIX T)

A culminating gesture for incorporating philosophies of the two practicums resulted in the creation of a more sophisticated button to be disseminated after parents have been involved in the reading program for a while and indicate that they have a grasp of the concept of PLAY. That button has curved type at top and bottom spelling out each acronym. The words in the middle read,

We

PLAY

with the

PRO's

at

_____ PRESCHOOL

That slogan will also be used in the form of a rubber stamp on record-keeping sheets to demonstrate a family's achievement of reading 10 books (APPENDIX U).

For a daily prereading activity, the writer chose to usher in storytime with song and dance. She wrote lyrics highlighting the program's literacy themes (APPENDIX V). A young talented friend fit the words to music; plans are underway to choreograph accompanying lively moves. The writer/practitioner hopes that every moment of reading will be celebrated as a joyous occasion.

Summary of Implementation Steps

The following is a summary of major steps taken to implement the practicum:

1. DECIDED ON THEME FOR PRESCHOOL LITERACY PROGRAM:

   LITERACY AND LOVE GO HAND IN HAND
   WE READ TO OUR CHILDREN EACH DAY

2. OUTLINED AND DISCUSSED OBJECTIVES WITH PRESCHOOL DIRECTOR
3. CONNECTED WITH ONE CHURCH PRIOR TO CHRISTMAS FOR HOLIDAY SUPPORT
4. BEGAN TO RECEIVE, CATALOG, CATEGORIZE, AND COLORCODE BOOKS
5. BROUGHT LIMITED AMOUNT OF CATEGORIZED, COLORCODED BOOKS TO PRESCHOOL FOR TEMPORARY STARTUP PROGRAM
6. SET UP TEMPORARY BOOK-CHECKOUT LOG FOR PARENTS
7. INVITED NEW MEMBER TO JOIN THE PRESCHOOL BOARD TO ASSIST WITH LITERACY PROGRAM
8. MAILED PROMOTIONAL LETTERS WITH BULLETIN NOTICES IN SOLICITATION OF BOOKS TO LOCAL CHURCHES
9. MADE WRITER/PRACTITIONER'S PHONE NUMBER AVAILABLE AS A "BOOK HOTLINE"
10. ARRANGED FOR PROJECT PUBLICITY WITH NEWSPAPERS
11. POSTED NEWSPAPER PUBLICITY ON PRESCHOOL BULLETIN BOARD
12. DISSEMINATED PROJECT'S NEWSPAPER PUBLICITY TO PARENTS
13. APPEALED TO COMMUNITY THRIFT STORES FOR BOOK CONTRIBUTIONS
14. WROTE TO CHILDREN'S BOOK PUBLISHERS RE DONATIONS
15. MAILED PROMOTIONAL PACKETS TO COMMUNITY GROUPS

16. INQUIRED AT BOOK STORES ABOUT OWNER CONTRIBUTIONS TO PRESCHOOL LIBRARY
17. ARRANGED GUEST-READER AND CULTURAL-APPRECIATION ACTIVITIES, INCLUDING MONTHLY PRESENTATION BY PUPPETEER
18. SOLICITED LOCAL MERCHANTS FOR PROJECT SUPPLIES
19. DESIGNED AND CREATED CERTIFICATE OF APPRECIATION FOR GUEST READERS AND MAJOR CONTRIBUTORS
20. DESIGNED AND DREW UP LOGO IN HARMONY WITH LITERACY THEME
21. CREATED PRESCHOOLER LIBRARY CARD AS PROGRAM'S SPECIAL ATTRACTION
22. PHOTOGRAPHED CHILDREN FOR THE LIBRARY CARD
23. DEVISED RECORD-KEEPING FOLDER FOR PARENT/CHILD READING PARTICIPATION IN CONJUNCTION WITH BOOK-CHECKOUT PROCEDURE
24. DESIGNED AND CREATED CERTIFICATE OF ACHIEVEMENT TO BE AWARDED TO PARENTS AND PRESCHOOLERS READING OFTEN
25. CONFERRED AND COLLABORATED WITH COLLEAGUE AND PRESCHOOL DIRECTOR ABOUT FLOOR PLAN FOR INSTALLATION OF LIBRARY COUNTERS AND BOOKSHELVES
26. MET WITH AND EXPLAINED FLOOR PLAN TO PRESIDENT OF EXCHANGE CLUB IN CHARGE OF PHYSICAL INSTALLATION
27. PREPARED INFORMATIONAL NEWSLETTERS FOR PARENTS ON TOPICS OF CREATIVE PLAY AND EMERGENT LITERACY

28. DESIGNED AND ORDERED I'M A PRO" PARENT BUTTONS, CHILDREN'S STICKERS, AND BOOKMARKS FOR INITIATION OF PROGRAM

29. DESIGNED AND ORDERED CONTINUING READING INCENTIVE BUTTONS FOR PARENTS: "WE PLAY WITH THE PRO's"

30. WROTE LYRICS FOR PREREADING ACTIVITY SONG

31. ARRANGED FOR A PARENT NIGHT ORIENTATION TO THE LITERACY PROGAM

32. ENSURED SUCCESS OF LIBRARY PROGRAM BY PUTTING ALL MECHANISMS INTO "PLAY": PARENTS AS LITERACY ADVOCATES FOR YOUNGSTERS

CHAPTER V

RESULTS, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Results

Objective 1, increasing the preschool library's book count from 55 books to 650 books, was achieved and surpassed. The most recent book count totaled 825 books. Using that figure, each child is guaranteed 12 books instead of the minimum of 10 as specified in the practicum proposal. As the writer/practitioner received the books, she affixed easily visible labeling tape of assorted colors near the bottom of the outside binding to facilitate the categorizing process and recorded the books in her computer alphabetically by title. Some categories overlap; her rationale for selecting them is explained after each classifying label as follows: 1. ANIMAL STORIES: RED. Those books include stories about animals which take on human characteristics and act as people. Usually no people are present. Examples of such a book would be Russell Hoban's Bread and Jam for Francis and The Musicians of Bremen retold by Ben Cruise. 2. FAIRY TALES AND FANTASY: PINK. Those books include old classics such as Snow White and Pinocchio and more modern books such as Egrin and the Painted Wizard by Amanda Walsh. 3. HOLIDAYS: GREY: Those books include several in the Christmas category such as Christmas Joys by Kathleen Daly and Arthur's Christmas Cookies by Lillian Hoban in addition to some Halloween and Thanksgiving books. 4. LEARNING: GREEN. Those books may include animals or people, but their primary purpose is to inform or teach. Examples in that category are My First Rhyming Picture ABC by Brian Miles and A Panda Is Black and White by Dean Walley. 5. MACHINES: BLACK.

Those books may include people, but they are primarily about personified inanimate objects. Examples in that category are The Pony Engine by Mabel C. Bragg and Chitty Chitty Bang Bang by Ian Fleming. 6. MOTHER GOOSE/NURSERY RHYMES: YELLOW. Those books include traditional nursery rhymes and stories about characters from that genre. Examples in that category are Mother Goose adapted by Al Dempster and Old Mother Hubbard and Her Dog by Sarah Catherine Martin. 7. PEOPLE: BLUE. Those books include stories that use people as central characters or are told from a person's point of view. Although animals may be in the story, the books are distinguised from stories that personify animals. Examples are Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible No Good, Very Bad Day by Judith Viorst and Amelia Bedelia Helps Out by Peggy Parish. 8. MEDIA/TELEVISION CHARACTERS: WHITE. Those books include animals or cartoon figures primarily made well known by movies or television. Examples in that category are The Road Runner Mid-Mesa Marathon by Teddy Slater and The Sesame Street Library. In summation, categories were designated according to the books received. Three categories, those of LEARNING, PEOPLE, and ANIMALS in that order accounted for the majority of books. More classifications can be added as the need arises. It has been customary for the preschool teachers to read to the children twice a day. The writer has suggested that teachers select a book from the LEARNING category for morning sessions and that they and the children choose a book fom any other category for afternoon reading. The main purpose of labeling is to teach preschoolers that there are different types of books and that they can find and return a book to its proper location in their preschool library by using colored labels as a guide. More sophisticated

library skills can be taught to the youngsters and assimilated by them at an appropriate time.

Objective 2, gaining support of three to five community groups to build a collection of children's literature for the onsite minilibrary, was achieved and surpassed. Two churches, two community service groups, and a thrift organization became major contributors to the project. Initially, the writer thought that she would target Elks, Kiwanis, and Rotary associations before all others. After talking with several community members, she decided, however, to begin with women's church groups noted for their enduring record of cooperation with appeals of that nature. Their immediate, gratifying response launched the writer/practitioner's ongoing categorizing process. She postponed contact with the other three groups until later when they were not as involved with seasonal projects. Other community organizations have since shown interest and pledged future support to begin in the fall of 1990. As the writer was compiling her final report, she was notified by the newsletter editor of the Chamber of Commerce that a notice requesting contributions for the preschool library was mailed to 1000 members. That same day, the President of the Kiwanis Club advised her to submit to him a complete library needs list, prioritizing items without regard to their cost. Postpracticum, the writer will keep the project alive at the preschool and in the community, continuing to solicit donations from various groups in a systematic manner.

Objective 3, establishing a liaison between one public library system and the preschool, was achieved and surpassed. Early in the practicum process, the writer contacted the coordinator of children's services at the county library system and inquired about the possibility of receiving book donations for the preschool's minilibrary. After surveying her branch

libraries for books that were being phased off the shelves, she compiled a box of 50 books for a contribution. She indicated the possibility of repeating the process in six to eight months. Looking to additional sources, the writer contacted three other public library systems in neighboring towns. Each of the head librarians made a commitment to the literacy project by eagerly offerring to set aside children's books for donation twice a year after their spring and fall book sales. It has been customary for them to have a sizeable supply of leftovers for donation to charity-sponsored thrift stores. They agreed for future practice to break precedent and save them for the preschool library.

Objective 4, promoting an increase of weekly book checkouts from the preschool library by parent/child, was postponed due to an unanticipated extensive construction project which made it impossible to bring large numbers of new books into the facility. Midway through practicum implementation the preschool received a grant of $11,000. from a private corporation which enabled the preschool to undergo a substantial and much-needed interior renovation providing more "classroom" space. The writer had been collecting, cataloging, and color coding newly-acquired books at her home and was ready to transfer books to the preschool in order to begin the lending process; however, it was inappropriate to do so during the remodeling phase; there was no space for the books.

Objective 5, enlisting 100% participation from parents in reading to their child/children for 15 minutes each day in conjunction with the checking out of books, was of necessity postponed for the same reason; one objective was dependent upon the other.

Objective 6, securing "guest readers" was achieved with a modification

and surpassed. The writer was introduced to a woman in the community who wished to become involved with a literacy project. The preschool seemed to be the ideal place to meet her needs and those of the children. She exhibited a dramatic charm and read most expressively to the children. It was decided to share her talents with both age groups because all of the preschoolers enjoyed her, and she had the time. She made herself available one day per week for two hours. Dividing her time between the age groups meant that she would spend an hour with each group. In general, she would allow 20 to 30 minutes for her formal group presentation and then serve preschoolers in an individual capacity as needed for the remainder of the hour, even if it meant just listening to a child.

In her initial practicum the writer emphasized the importance of adults listening to children. She discussed her listening philosophy with the preschool director who ardently concurred with it and shared the writer's desire to recruit visitors for a listening/nurturing component facilitated and enhanced by a rocking chair session in the minilibrary. The writer located one candidate for the position when she was approached by a resident of the town who expressed interest in reactivating her long since dormant connection with the preschool. She had volunteered her time at the preschool in its early years but had not visited there since she had begun a teaching career and simultaneously been raising her own three children. Now, 16 years later, the idea of being a "listener/rocker" appeals to her. She agreed to serve in that capacity one day a week. Postdoctorate, the writer intends to recruit more visitors for that purpose. There are many people who would like to volunteer but feel uncomfortable with reading or storytelling. Just being an attentive,

unobtrusive listener would be providing a valuable function.

> The need for listeners is so great in the development of language and the fostering of creativity that the writer began to fantasize about an ideal child-care center where each child would have his/her own personal "LISTENER" . . . to draw out that unique creativeness within. (Ryan, 1989, p. 46)

In another facet of the "guest readers" objective, the writer arranged to have a local librarian visit the preschool for story reading on a once/monthly basis. A former preschool teacher, she combines her presentations with the use of music and movement and displays books from the public library to foster a concept of library awareness. A schedule has been arranged whereby she will visit the preschool once a month for four months, and on the fifth month she will invite the youngsters to the library for a get-acquainted tour followed up by more storytelling activities. After a three-month hiatus she will repeat the cycle. Coincidentally, that "guest reader" had also volunteered at the preschool in its early years and is delighted to become involved once again, renewing ties with the director who has remained a constant guiding force at the center for the past 24 years.

During the course of the practicum implementation, the writer learned fascinating news from her electrical contractor who has been servicing her home for 10 years. His wife, who is also his faithful assistant in the trade, has recently become deeply involved in the world of make believe. When she is not working alongside her husband with hot wires, she is heating up imaginations of preschoolers around the county with creative puppetry presentations. Prevailed upon by the writer to practice her craft

at the preschool, she staged a spectacular performance that left the preschoolers spellbound. A special creation of the puppeteer revolved around Dominique, a dragon who dreamed about becoming a bird. Two criteria in the transformation posed problems for Dominique. She was told that she would have to sing and that she would need to eat worms. When she performed the first feat in a less than melodious voice -- namely, the utterance of a horrifying shriek in an attempt at "There's a Hole in the Bottom of the Sea," the youngsters instantly covered their ears in self-defense. Devouring worms proved an even more impossible task for Dominique who was forced to spit out the disgusting delicacies amid the children's squeamish squeals of delight. Indeed the sight of the gagging dragon and the giggling audience was a "charming spectacle of children at play" (Thorndike & Barnhart, 1979, p. 978). Having enjoyed the performance as much as the children, the puppeteer agreed to make monthly appearances at the preschool and has since performed an original version of "The Tortoise and the Hare" in which the creator substituted a rat for Mr. Hare who was "hospitalized" due to an injury. The writer intends to write a grant proposal requesting funds in hopes that the puppeteer could be remunerated for her time. Her creative expertise fulfills a vital literacy need for preschoolers.

Another exciting guest presentation is being prepared by a young engineer acquaintance of the writer whose engineering firm encourages its employees to become involved in educational improvement programs throughout the county. He and a friend are putting together a package on making mathematics and science more attractive to elementary school children. When the writer inquired if he could gear it to preschool age children, he replied that he would accept the challenge. Henniger (1987) emphasizes

that ". . . childhood play provides many excellent opportunities for learning fundamental concepts and developing appropriate attitudes toward . . . important disciplines. One significant component of play is the mental ability to manipulate symbols" (p. 168). As they become familiar with the use of symbols, children are preparing themselves for future academic success. The use of symbols in play is a forerunner to the use of symbols in the fields of mathematics and science. The writer envisions a mathematics/science presentation for inquisitive youngsters as equivalent to a magic show. She is looking forward to the engineers' production.

Realizing the importance of male role models in the lives of preschoolers, many of whom live in female single-parent households, the writer hoped to find a special man to join the group of volunteers. She was fortunate to secure her "first choice" for a monthly commitment of reading/talking/listening to the children. Two years ago the writer had worked in the dropout prevention program with an assistant principal who has a mild, soft-spoken way about him that the middle school students especially liked. Knowing that he had recently retired, the writer thought he might enjoy being with youngsters, and she knew they would enjoy being with him. When she phoned his home, she learned to her surprise that his wife has been directing her own preschool (in another town) for 18 years, and he is now managing it for her while she continues in her position as an assistant principal in the school system. The writer deemed it a truly serendipitous find to locate a gentle grandfather experienced with preschoolers willing to adjust his schedule to accommodate the literacy program. Linking up with grandparents is a rewarding enterprise for participants on both ends of the spectrum. The writer/practitioner has

been fortunate to meet a host of cooperative people, generously investing in the future of our society. Postpracticum, the writer/practitioner in her role as a board member intends to arrange monthly cultural programs for preschoolers in keeping with the overall objective of enhancing creative play and critical literacy.

Unexpected Events

Prior to the new construction, the writer had planned to have bookshelves installed near the front door so that the book checkout process would be convenient and simple for parents. She had mentioned to the director at their first lengthy meeting that ideally she would like to see a miniature library arrangement complete with counter, dropoff slot for books, bulletin board, and appropriate library furnishings. The director shared her sentiments and emphasized her desire to include a rocking chair in that imaginary library. When the director received the $11,000. grant, she promptly notified the writer that it would be possible to create the minilibrary they had visualized. An addition to the west side of the building resulting in a spacious room for 2-year-olds and a relocation of the 3-year-olds from the east side to the south side freed up space in the front of the building to be used for a literacy center. Knowing that their dream would become a reality generated great excitement for those most directly involved in the practicum implementation. In spite of the fact that two reading objectives had to be put on hold, the writer was overjoyed about the unexpected turn of events and is certain that preschoolers and parents will be enjoying many hours of satisfying reading once the library is "opened" and the literacy program officially launched. At the end of

the practicum implementation, construction is underway for the minilibrary as per the literacy center floor plan (APPENDIX O).

The Exchange Club who has undertaken the project enthusiastically pledged to assemble a first-rate installation. After consulting with a local librarian and observing a small branch library facility in the area, the writer formulated her priorities for the physical arrangement of the minilibrary. The writer and a teacher friend met with the preschool director for her input to establish exact dimensions of the project. The writer's friend drew up a plan on graph paper. After more discussion and a few revisions, they explained that plan to the President of the Exchange Club. He met with his members for their support and then, along with his carpenter, mapped out a course of action. At first, they decided to purchase modular units for the job, but after taking a look at the materials they had ordered, they were dipleased with its low grade and decided to build the entire project from "scratch" with quality workmanship and quality lumber. Once their schedules coincide, they anticipate building the library in two days.

Throughout the practicum process, the preschool director has been warmly supportive of the minilibrary. Since the physical dimensions of the library will be larger than originally conceived, the director told the writer that she could envision the library as one that would serve not only just the preschool but the local community as well. The writer had planned to provide books for young parents as they picked up their children. Now she will also collect a variety of books with appeal to all age groups. There is no public library in the vicinity. In the writer's initial practicum, she wrote a segment on family impact devoted to the coattails' effect of siblings' reading habits on one another. With the

enlarged facility, the concept can expand to uncles, cousins, aunts, and grandparents. There should be room for about 2000 books with priority space still being given to fine quality children's literature. As the children progress to higher grades, the library will still be available to them. Within five years, a public library will be built in the area, and by that time, they should be eager to patronize it.

One of the writer's favorite activities as a parent of young children was to compose words to songs. After her first child was born, she began singing a song to her every night. Soon after the child began to talk, the writer composed another song which required a verbal reponse from the child. That tune was "carried" down to each child in the family for 25 years. Each child until he/she was about 12 years of age requested the song every night before falling sleep. Now, the writer secretly believes that the song was largely reponsible for her children's healthy self-esteem although when she composed it, she had no idea of the longevity it would assume nor of the long-term consequences it might project. Periodically as her children grew up, she composed zany songs. Always, her children shook their head in quizzical disapproval but eventually they ended up singing them and engaging in a hearty laugh. Laughter and creativity have often been linked to productivity of ideas. As a grand finale for her practicum implementation, the writer decided to create a song for the literacy program envisioning it as a daily prereading activity. Since she writes only lyrics, most of her tunes sound the same. She tried it out in front of her five adult children who as usual shook their heads. Unexpectedly, on the same day that she wrote it, she was fortunate to be reintroduced to a young musician who agreed to put it to music and perform it at the preschool. In less than a week he recorded it on tape, visited

the preschool with his guitar, and taught the song to the children who were immediately reponsive to his interest in them, to his instruction, and to his intuitive musical charm. Teachers of both age groups were delighted with the composition. The teacher of the younger children prompted those in her tutelage to dance to the music, shaking tambourines to the beat. All of the preschoolers proudly displayed their vivid "I'M A PRO" stickers on their hand, head, or shirt. When the preschool director walked into the room and heard the music, she was thrilled. Seeking her approval, the writer inquired if she liked the song. She replied, "I don't like it; I love it!" From the writer's point of view, the song is great fun, but its impact is serious. In just a few minutes it conveys the essential message of the literacy program and excites children about the joys of reading. The spontaneity with which the song was composed and accepted was in retrospect a keynote of the general acceptance of the practicum. As evidenced in comparing prepracticum anticipations with postpracticum realities, several practicum-related procedures did not progress as anticipated; nevertheless, the natural progression and assimilation of unexpected events and the spontaneity with which persons became involved and cooperated in the program continue to be a stimulating experience for the writer/practitioner. In her psyche, the simple strain of "I'M A PRO" resounds as a rhapsody for literacy.

Conclusions

The ENDING IS THE BEGINNING! Four of the six objectives were implemented, measured, and assessed. The administrative mechanisms of the practicum have set the stage for an extensive lending library component soon to begin when the books are in place. The community has demonstrated

its willingness to support the program and sustain it as an ongoing project. Attitudes have been formed; parents, preschoolers, and preschool personnel are looking forward to the new library and are ready to ensure the success of the family reading program. The writer is confident that the reading objectives will be attained. Her initial practicum served as a pilot study for the second project. In that program success came through the ideology of implementing creative play through reading-related activities with only a few boxes of children's books as a base. For the second practicum, the same ideology has been operating with a far greater support network as a foundation. Ultimately, it is the universal appeal of children's literature that will keep youngsters clamoring for more reading experiences leading to critical literacy enlightenment.

Recommendations

The first set of recommendations pertains to objectives dealing with community support:

1. Those who wish to seek improvement in the community need to find effective means of communicating that need to those in a position to help.
2. Assistance is available at many levels of involvement from individuals to small and large groups.
3. Delayed reponses should not discourage agents of change; they often produce great yields.

The second set of recommendations relate to identical ideological objectives of the writer's work in Practicums I and II:

4. Strong parental involvement is needed in children's literacy development.

5. Early childhood literacy experiences need to be rich in creative play.
6. Onsite library services need to be available for parents of children in full-time childcare.
7. Challenging, literacy-related, imaginative experiences offered throughout a child's schooling far surpass later-in-life "critical thinking" remedies. Ongoing literacy enrichment should be a requirement for all those who call themselves educated, for all those who educate, and for all those under the care of educators.

Dissemination

The writer intends to disseminate the results of her practicum to the fullest extent possible. She believes it could be a model for all preschools. She will promote it through educational and political channels by means of correspondence, media publicity, or personal presentations.

Through her participation on committees and as a result of publicity about the project in the community, she has been invited by a county program specialist in prekindergarten early intervention to describe her model to all daycare directors operating under the county school system. In addition, the writer/practitioner was recently invited to present a guest lecture on children's literature at a local university. She chose the social aspect as her focus, "Children's Literature, A Major Force in Promoting Literacy and Wiping Out Illiteracy." She stressed the vital role of parents in the process and the

need for creative, imaginative teachers at all levels of the educational spectrum.

For the past several months, the writer/practitioner has been attending county-wide strategic planning committee meetings related to the formation of an effective program of harmonious racial balance within the public school system. Subteams have been established; each team must produce an action plan as an end product. The writer intends to share her practicum as an action plan which if universally implemented will produce highly literate students, a plan which will ultimately end prejudice through quality education.

Edelman (1987) ends her book Families in Peril with insight from Dr. Benjamin E. Mays, former president of Morehouse College whose view expresses the writer/practitioner's sentiment on motivation to produce social change in today's world,

> It must be borne in mind that the tragedy of life doesn't lie in not reaching your goal. The tragedy lies in having no goal to reach. It isn't a calamity to die with dreams unfulfilled, but it is a calamity not to dream. It is not a disaster to be unable to capture your ideal, but it is a disaster to have no ideal to capture. (p. 113)

The urgency of the literacy vacuum is upon us. We must stretch our imaginations to capture the ideal. Let us begin.

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APPENDIX A

PARENT QUESTIONNAIRE SURVEY

WE AT _____ PRESCHOOL ARE MAKING PLANS TO SET UP A LIBRARY PROGRAM FOR YOUR CHILDREN SO THAT THEY WILL BE ABLE TO TAKE BOOKS HOME MORE OFTEN. YOU CAN HELP US BY ANSWERING THE 5 QUESTIONS BELOW AND LEAVING THE PAPER IN THE BASKET. WE DO NOT NEED YOUR NAME. THANK YOU FOR YOUR COOPERATION.

.....

QUESTIONNAIRE

PLEASE CIRCLE THE LETTER OF YOUR ANSWER.

HOW MANY CHILDREN DO YOU HAVE?

A. ONE CHILD.....11
B. TWO CHILDREN.....16
C. THREE CHILDREN.....9
D. FOUR CHILDREN.....1
E. _____(WRITE IN.)

Total Responses: 37

HOW OFTEN DO YOU TAKE YOUR CHILD (OR CHILDREN) TO A BOOKSTORE TO SELECT A BOOK?

A. ONCE A WEEK.....5
B. ONCE A MONTH.....7
C. ONCE EVERY 6 MONTHS.....8
D. ONCE A YEAR.....1
E. NOT AT ALL.....16
F. _____(WRITE IN.)

Total Responses: 37

HOW OFTEN DO YOU VISIT A PUBLIC LIBRARY WITH YOUR CHILD (OR CHILDREN) TO SELECT A BOOK?

A. ONCE A WEEK.....4
B. ONCE A MONTH.....3
C. ONCE EVERY 6 MONTHS.....2
D. ONCE A YEAR.....4
E. NOT AT ALL.....24
F. _____(WRITE IN.)

Total Responses: 37

HOW OFTEN DO YOU READ WITH YOUR CHILD (OR CHILDREN) AT HOME?

A. 15 MINUTES A DAY.....12
B. 15 MINUTES TWICE A WEEK.....10.
C. 15 MINUTES ONCE A WEEK.....7
D. 15 MINUTES ONCE A MONTH.....6
E. NOT AT ALL.....2
F. _____(WRITE IN.)

Total Responses: 37

WOULD YOU BE INTERESTED IN CHECKING OUT BOOKS FROM _____ PRESCHOOL'S LIBRARY TO READ WITH YOUR CHILD (OR CHILDREN)?

A. VERY INTERESTED.....32
B. MODERATELY INTERESTED.....4
C. SLIGHTLY INTERESTED.....1
D. NOT AT ALL INTERESTED.....0
E. _____(WRITE IN.)

Total Responses: 37

APPENDIX B

PROMOTIONAL APPEAL TO COMMUNITY GROUPS

JUPITER PRE SCHOOL, Inc.

FLORIDA

DEDICATED TO ENRICHING THE LIVES OF UNDERPRIVILEGED YOUNGSTERS, PRE SCHOOL IS THE ONLY NONPROFIT PRESCHOOL IN NORTHERN COUNTY. THOSE OF US ASSOCIATED WITH THE CHILDCARE FACILITY ARE LAUNCHING A LITERACY PROGRAM DESIGNED TO PROMOTE PARENTAL AND FAMILY PARTICIPATION IN A CHILD'S READING PROCESS. OUR MAJOR GOALS FOCUS ON THE CREATION OF AN ON-SITE LIBRARY OF CHILDREN'S LITERATURE AND THE ARRANGEMENT OF COZY READING CORNERS WITHIN THE EXISTING BUILDING. THROUGH CREATIVE LITERACY-RELATED EXPERIENCES, WE HOPE TO IGNITE CHILDREN'S INHERENT IMAGINATION AND INSPIRE PARENTS IN KEEPING WITH THE PHILOSOPHY OF FORMER CHICAGO SCHOOL SUPERINTENDENT RUTH LOVE WHO BELIEVES, ". . . IF WE WOULD GET OUR PARENTS TO READ TO THEIR PRESCHOOL CHILDREN 15 MINUTES A DAY, WE COULD REVOLUTIONIZE THE SCHOOLS" (Trelease, 1985, p. xi.).

REALIZING THAT PRESCHOOL PARENTS HAVE LITTLE TIME TO VISIT LIBRARIES, WE INTEND TO OFFER AN EXCITING ALTERNATIVE IN BONDING PARENT AND CHILD TO FILL THAT LITERACY GAP. WE WILL BE SEEKING SUPPORT FROM LOCAL ORGANIZATIONS FOR DONATIONS OF BOOKS AND/OR MONEY FOR THIS INNOVATIVE PROJECT. SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES INCLUDE PROVIDING 10 BOOKS PER CHILD FOR IN-HOME CIRCULATION AND OBTAINING LIBRARY FURNISHINGS FOR THE DAYCARE CENTER.

OUR READING THEME AT PRE SCHOOL IS: LITERACY AND LOVE GO HAND IN HAND. WE READ TO OUR CHILDREN EACH DAY. YOUR HAND TO US IN THIS PROJECT WOULD UNITE IN AN EFFORT TO INSTILL A LIFELONG LOVE OF READING IN THE HEARTS AND MINDS OF OUR YOUNGSTERS. WE APPRECIATE ANY FORM OF YOUR ASSISTANCE AND HOPE YOU WILL HELP MAKE OUR COMMON VISION A DYNAMIC REALITY!

THE BOTTOM LINE IS BOOKS!! BOOKS!! BOOKS!! BOOKS!! BOOKS!! BOOKS!!

APPENDIX C

LETTER/INVITATION TO MRS. BARBARA BUSH

Mrs. Barbara Bush
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue
Washington, D.C. 20001

Dear Mrs. Bush,

Pre School in , Florida lies just 10 - 15 minutes away from the home of our President's mother. Dedicated to enriching the lives of its youngsters from low income families, it is the only private nonprofit preschool in northern county.

Those of us associated with the childcare facility are launching a literacy program designed to promote parental participation in a child's reading process. Our major goals focus on the creation of an on-site library of children's literature classics and the arrangement of cozy reading corners within the existing building. Through literary-related creative play experiences, we hope to ignite the children's inherent imagination and inspire parents in keeping with the philosophy of former Chicago school superintendent Ruth Love who believes, ". . . if we would get our parents to read to their preschool children 15 minutes a day, we could revolutiqnize the schools."

Realizing that preschool parents have little time to visit libraries, we intend to offer an exciting alternative in bonding parent and child to fill that literacy gap. We will be seeking support from local organizations for donations of books and/or money for this innovative project. Specific objectives include providing 5 - 8 books per child for in-home circulation and obtaining library furnishings for the daycare center.

Aware of your absorbing interest in literacy, we set out to write you for autographed pictures and possibly some literacy-related posters for our 65 children and their families. Then, it occurred to us that with the holiday season at hand, you will be spending some time in the area and you might like to stop by. We would love to see you!

Making a visit to the preschool and the round trip from could be done in less than one hour. The best times to meet parents and children together would be Monday - Friday at their drop off or pick up times of 7:45 a.m. or 4:45 p.m. We know that your presence would set the preschool aglow with enthusiasm and generate much needed community support to ensure the project's success. We also believe you will be warmly rewarded by smiles of joy if preschoolers and parents have the great fortune to meet and greet you.

Our reading theme at Pre School is LITERACY AND LOVE GO HAND IN HAND. WE READ TO OUR CHILDREN EACH DAY! Your hand to us in this program would help instill a lifelong love of reading in the hearts and minds of our youngsters. We appreciate your consideration of our request and hope you will help make our COMMON VISION a dynamic reality.

Sincerely,

Director

APPENDIX D

REPLY FROM MRS. BUSH

THE WHITE HOUSE

November 1, 1989

Dear Ms.

Thank you so much for inviting me to participate in your school reading program. As much as I would enjoy reading and being with you, I will not be able to accept your nice invitation.

Reading has always been one of the great joys of my life, and I hope it will become one of yours, too. It is so good to hear from those who know how important it is to read. One of the best things you can do is to help one another become the best readers possible.

Thank you for writing, and please encourage the students to keep reading as much and as often as they can, today and for the rest of their lives.

With all best wishes,

Warmly,

Barbara Bush

APPENDIX E

PROMOTIONAL LETTER

PRE SCHOOL, inc.

DEAR PASTOR,

Would it be possible to include the notice written below in your church bulletin for about 6 - 8 weeks beginning on Easter Sunday (or sooner)? We are counting on local churches for much of our support because the program is primarily oriented toward THE FAMILY and its role in the development of literacy. Many thanks for any assistance you can offer with this wonderful project! (I have included some recent newspaper coverage from the POST.)

Appreciatively,

Member, Board of Directors
PRE SCHOOL

.....

CHILDREN'S BOOKS NEEDED! YOUR GIFT OF ONE BOOK WILL MAKE A DIFFERENCE! PLEASE HELP PRE SCHOOL THE ONLY NONPROFIT PRE SCHOOL IN NORTHERN COUNTY, IN SETTING UP A FAMILY READING PROGRAM AND ON-SITE LENDING LIBRARY TO MAKE BOOKS MORE AVAILABLE TO WORKING PARENTS AND THEIR YOUNGSTERS AGES 2 to 5. IF YOU HAVE ANY USED BOOKS IN GOOD CONDITION OR WOULD LIKE TO DONATE ONE BOOK OR MONEY TOWARD THE PURCHASE OF A BOOK, CALL BOOK HOTLINE: BLESS YOU!

APPENDIX F

NEWSPAPER PROMOTION

PRESCHOOL LAUNCHES LITERACY PROJECT FOR INTERNATIONAL LITERACY YEAR WITH PRAISE FROM BARBARA BUSH

LITERACY AND LOVE GO HAND IN HAND!

Since 1966 Preschool has been a pioneer and model in the realm of preschool education. Now, in 1990, the childcare facility continues to be a leader in responding to the needs of its children and their families. In celebration of International Literacy Year and armed with a letter of praise from Barbra Bush, "One of the best things you can do is to help one another become the best readers possible," the preschool is launching a literacy project designed to promote family involvement in a child's reading process. Major goals of the program focus on creating a lending library of children's literature classics and arranging cozy reading corners within the existing building. Through literacy-related experiences, teachers hope to ignite the children's inherent imagination and inspire parents in keeping with the philosophy of former Chicago school superintendent Ruth Love who believes, ". . . if we would get our parents to read to their preschool children 15 minutes a day, we could revolutionize the schools."

The only nonprofit preschool in northern , county. Preschool is a shining example of wonders that can be realized through the efforts of community support. At the heart and soul of the program is Mrs. , educator and mother of nine children now grown. Cofounder with local civic leaders and director of the preschool since its doors opened 24 years ago, , steeped with training in early childhood classes including Montessori methods runs the program with love, wisdom, and common sense. Gentle but firm discipline is the order of the day.

Time demands on working parents are great. A recent survey at the preschool revealed strong parental interest in a library on preschool premises. Parents have little opportunity to take their children to purchase books at bookstores and rarely if ever visit a public library. Citing reading as one of her favorite activities, wants all of her 65 children (ages 2 to 5) to share in reading's pleasures. Daily story sessions have always been an integral part of her program. Knowing how important it is for parents to be reading role models for their children, she wishes to make books readily available to both parent and child for in-home reading. "Having a lending library right here at the preschool is the answer. When parents pick up their children, they can pick up a book or two at the same time. Our minimum goal is to set up a library with 650 books or 10 books per child. We hope to reach out to as many community organizations as possible. So far the response has been overwhelmingly supportive and extremely gratifying. Our reading theme at PreSchool is LITERACY AND LOVE GO HAND-IN-HAND. WE READ TO OUR CHILDREN EACH DAY!"

Preschool board member , a Middle School language arts teacher, has linked the reading program with her Nova University doctoral research on cultural literacy and creative PLAY which has recently been accepted for inclusion in Educational Resource Information Center at

the University of Illinois, available for nationwide dissemination: PARENTS as LITERACY ADVOCATES for YOUNGSTERS; PLAY as make believe and PLAY as meaningful conversations between adults and children (Isenberg & Jacobs, 1982); PLAY as the development of creativity from listening skills (Gray & Chanoff, 1984); PLAY as creative storytelling stemming from the use of picture books (Greaney, 1986); PLAY as reading in the home (Ninio & Bruner, 1976); PLAY and parent storytelling using children's literature as a catalyst (Singer & Singer, 1985); PLAY as fantasizing (Wolfgang & Sanders, 1981, Egan, 1985, Dehouske, 1982); and PLAY as reading aloud and role playing (Trelease, 1982). Parental reading to the young child is also very soothing and often calms down hyperactive behavior.

Current research on emergent literacy now recognizes what educators like have known all along: literacy experiences begin at home and at preschool in creative, unstructured ways. On its lowest level of meaning, literacy implies the ability to read and write; on its highest level, it connotes the attainment of knowledge, culture, understanding, and enlightenment. Literacy is intergenerational. Often parents minimize their own importance. They need to be aware of their literacy advocate role and look upon it as a great source of ENJOYMENT and BONDING with their child.

Community members who wish to become involved in this project can be assured that a gift of one book will make a difference! Used books in good condition are acceptable as well as new books and monetary contributions of any amount toward the purchase of books. Especially desirable are books combining highly imaginative reading content with colorful artistic appeal. Wordless books are valuable too for sparking creativity. A host of children's illustrators offer delightful, fanciful masterpieces.

Chairman of the Board of Directors at Preschool is excited about the project. She proclaims, " truly makes miracles happen!" People rally to help her because of the quality of her longstanding program, her devotion to the preschool, and the joy which she brings to children in her care. The school is located at , . For more information, call THE BOTTOM LINE IS: BOOKS! BOOKS! BOOKS! BOOKS!

APPENDIX G

LETTER TO CHILDREN'S BOOK PUBLISHERS

NAME OF PUBLISHER
ADDRESS

WOULD YOU BE WILLING TO HONOR OUR NEW PRESCHOOL LIBRARY WITH SOME OF YOUR WONDERFUL SELECTIONS OF CHILDREN'S LITERATURE FOR AGES TWO TO FIVE? YOUR CONTRIBUTION WOULD GO A LONG WAY TOWARD ENLIGHTENING THE LIVES OF OUR PRECIOUS YOUNGSTERS.

MOST APPRECIATIVELY,

NAME OF WRITER
LITERACY PROJECT COORDINATOR

APPENDIX H

DAILY/WEEKLY RATING OF BOOKS

DAILY/WEEKLY RATING OF FAVORITE BOOKS

NAME OF CHILD: _____

MONDAY DATE_____, 1990 READING TIME: _____ MINUTES

BOOK TITLE: _____

AUTHOR: _____

PARENT/GUARDIAN'S RATING (Please circle): FAIR GOOD GREAT SUPER

CHILD'S RATING (Please circle): FAIR GOOD GREAT SUPER

TUESDAY DATE_____, 1990 READING TIME: _____ MINUTES

BOOK TITLE: _____

AUTHOR: _____

PARENT/GUARDIAN'S RATING (Please circle): FAIR GOOD GREAT SUPER

CHILD'S RATING (Please circle): FAIR GOOD GREAT SUPER

WEDNESDAY DATE_____, 1990 READING TIME: _____ MINUTES

BOOK TITLE: _____

AUTHOR: _____

PARENT/GUARDIAN'S RATING (Please circle): FAIR GOOD GREAT SUPER

CHILD'S RATING (Please circle): FAIR GOOD GREAT SUPER

THURSDAY DATE_____, 1990 READING TIME: _____ MINUTES

BOOK TITLE: _____

AUTHOR: _____

PARENT/GUARDIAN'S RATING (Please circle): FAIR GOOD GREAT SUPER

CHILD'S RATING (Please circle): FAIR GOOD GREAT SUPER

FRIDAY DATE_____, 1990 READING TIME: _____ MINUTES

BOOK TITLE: _____

AUTHOR: _____

PARENT/GUARDIAN'S RATING (Please circle): FAIR GOOD GREAT SUPER

CHILD'S RATING (Please circle): FAIR GOOD GREAT SUPER

APPENDIX I

BOOK CHECKOUT SHEET

BOOK CHECKOUT SHEET

PLEASE WRITE THE TITLE OF THE BOOK, THE DATE YOU ARE CHECKING IT OUT FROM OUR PRESCHOOL LIBRARY, AND YOUR INITIALS. MANY THANKS.

HAPPY READING WITH A PRO!!!

BOOK TITLE	DATE	YOUR INITIALS

APPENDIX J

COUNT YOUR BOOKS!

COUNT YOUR BOOKS!

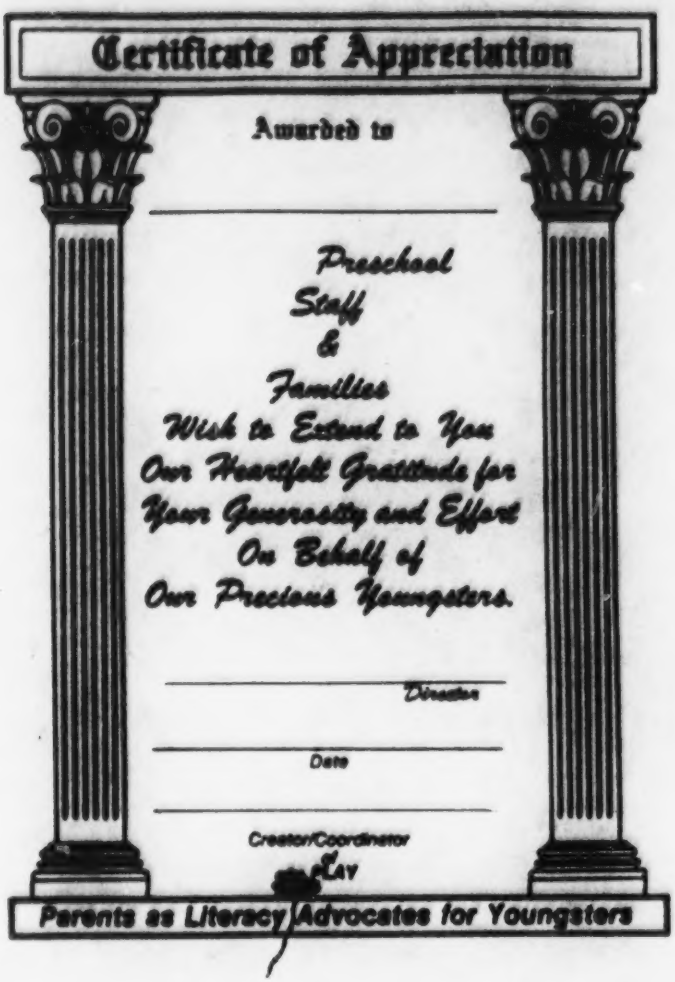
AFTER YOU HAVE READ 10 BOOKS WITH YOUR CHILD, PLEASE SIGN YOUR NAME BELOW, WRITE TODAY'S DATE, AND HAVE YOUR SHEET STAMPED.

THANKS FOR PLAYING WITH A PRO!!!!

PARENT SIGNATURE	DATE	STAMP

APPENDIX K

CERTIFICATE OF APPRECIATION

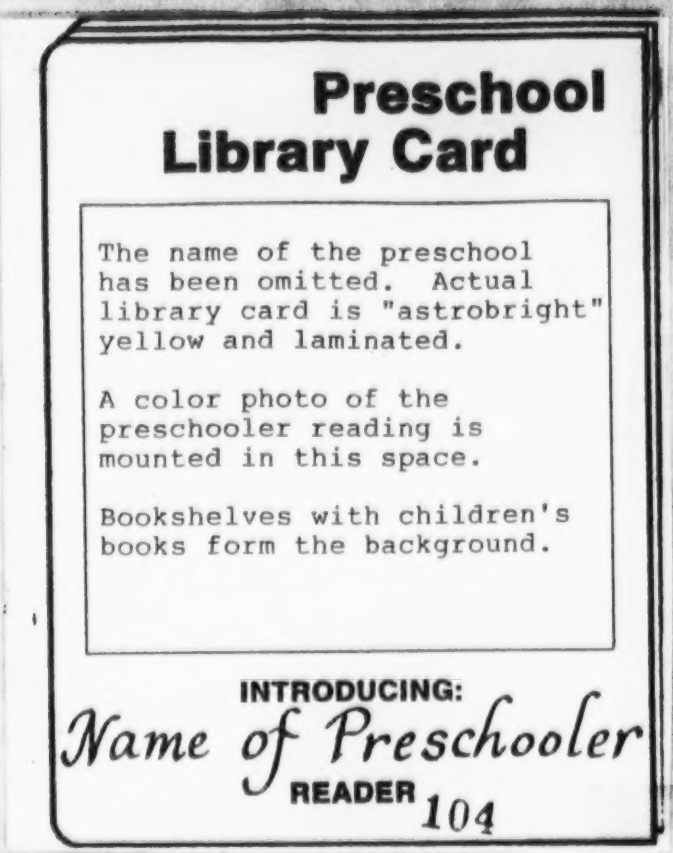

Certificate of Appreciation
Awarded to
Preschool
Staff
&
Families
Wish to Extend to You
Our Heartfelt Gratitude for
Your Generosity and Effort
On Behalf of
Our Precious Youngsters.
Director
Date
Creator/Coordinator
LAV
Parents as Literacy Advocates for Youngsters

APPENDIX L

LOGO

APPENDIX M

LIBRARY CARD


Preschool
Library Card
The name of the preschool has been omitted. Actual library card is "astrobright" yellow and laminated.
A color photo of the preschooler reading is mounted in this space.
Bookshelves with children's books form the background.
INTRODUCING:
Name of Preschooler
READER
104

APPENDIX N

CERTIFICATE OF ACHIEVEMENT

Certificate of Achievement

Awarded to Family
of

_____

for

Sharing _ Books Together

At Preschool
Literacy and Love Go
Hand in Hand

We Read to Our Children
Each Day

Director

_____

Creator/Coordinator
of
PLAY

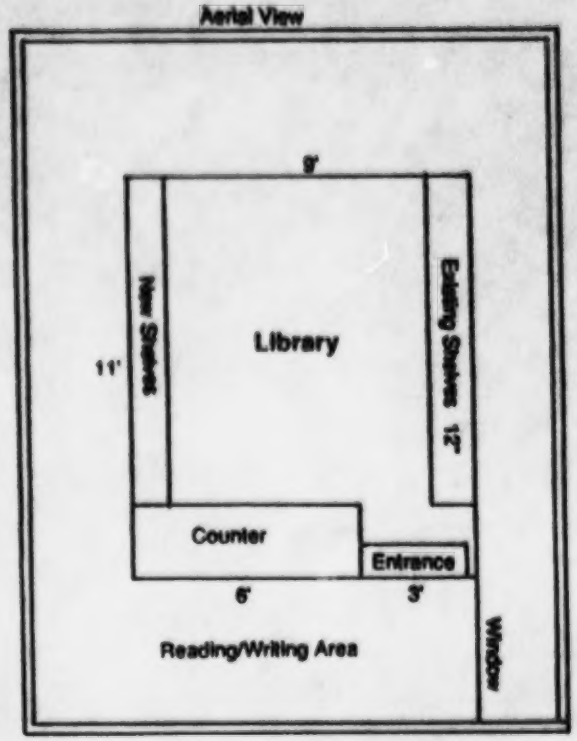
Parents as Literacy Advocates for Youngsters

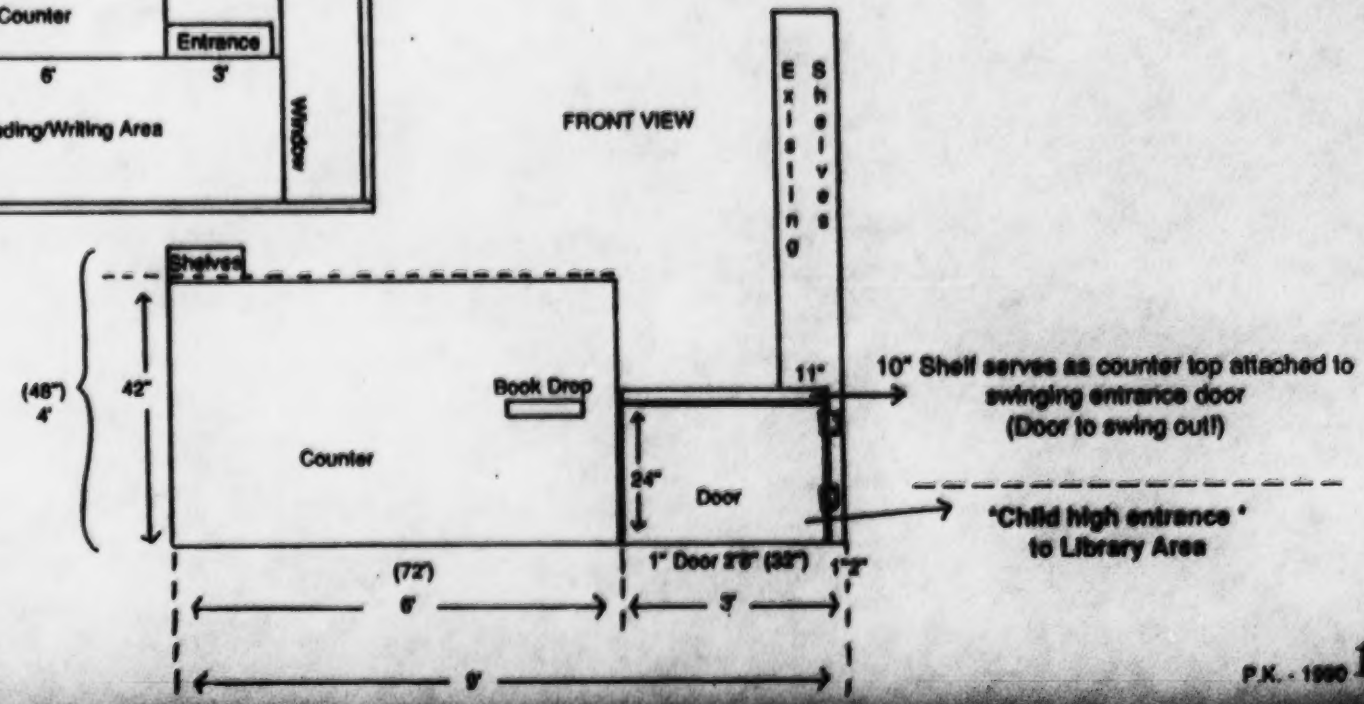
APPENDIX O

LITERACY CENTER FLOOR PLAN

PRESCHOOL LITERACY CENTER

Floor Plan





1/4" = 6"
1/2" = 1'

APPENDIX P

NEWSLETTER ON PLAY RESEARCH

PLAY PROGRAM - INFORMATIONAL NEWSLETTER
PARENTS AS LITERACY ADVOCATES FOR YOUNGSTERS

TOPIC: PLAY RESEARCH
Susan Fay Ryan

Dear Parents, Grandparents, Guardians,

DO YOU THINK LIKE THE EXPERTS? PLEASE READ FURTHER.

PLAY -- often referred to as the "work" of children -- fulfills a valuable role in a child's daily life. Children who are guided toward CREATIVE PLAY will reap great rewards in terms of intellectual, social, and emotional growth.

The PLAY program here has been emphasizing PLAY as it relates to children's literature and literacy-related experiences, a focusing on imagination, expression of verbal skills, and overall nurturing of your youngsters' creativity.

Below is a list of experts (educators, child psychologists, social scientists) who have studied and written about the topic of PLAY. I have included the specific area in which each of the researchers specializes along with a brief suggestion on how you can use their ideas in playing with your children. Many of you may have been engaging in this type of PLAY with your child/children all along. If so, you can pat yourself on the back. CONSIDER YOURSELF AN EXPERT!!

1. Play as meaningful conversations between adults and children (Isenberg & Jacobs, 1982). Try to find time when you're not rushed to have good talks with your child; good conversations may often take place in the car when you are alone together.

2. Play as the development of creativity from listening skills (Gray & Chanoff, 1984). Successful school experiences related to listening skills involve reading and writing activities and a child's ability to concentrate. Reading to your child and carrying on good conversations with your child help build listening skills. Furthermore, listening to your child shows him/her how to listen to you and others. Above all, it's FUN! After our storytimes, I have enjoyed listening to your children. They love an audience, and I have been intrigued by what they have had to say.

3. Play as creative storytelling stemming from the use of picture books (Greaney, 1986). As your child looks at picture books, a little prompting from you can produce some fascinating stories rooted in your child's imagination. Children are the most exuberant storytellers. They never cease to amaze me!

4. Play as reading in the home (Minio & Bruner, 1978; Neuman & Prowda, 1982). Reading is always a great adventure! Children engage in play as they listen to stories and become entranced in their wonderment. I like to call it a FROLIC OF THE MIND!

5. Play and parent storytelling using children's literature as a catalyst (Singer & Singer, 1985). Here's where you show off your creativity. Several of you have told me how much you enjoy telling stories to your children and what wonderful memories you have of a favorite storyteller from your own childhood. If you haven't tried this yet, you're in for a treat. You will be entertaining a truly captive audience, and you will be a superstar with your kids!

6. Play as reading aloud and role playing (Trelease, 1982). By reading aloud to your child, you can be providing the greatest of all play. Just look at your child's face and see those wide eyes, happy smiles, looks of amazement, and a full range of expressions. Behind those angelic faces, the wheels of imagination are in full gear. Every time you change your voice to sound like one of the characters, you are using role playing. Children love it. They too get right into the act without any self-consciousness. As you may have noticed, they are natural actors. Remember, "The play is the thing!"

7. Play as fantasizing (Wolfgang & Sanders, 1981; Egan, 1985; Dehouske, 1982) When children are exercising their imaginative powers, they are creating their own play which can entertain them for hours on end.

8. Play as make believe (Isenberg & Jacobs, 1982). Pretending is one of the most delightful of childhood activities. Think back not so long ago to some of your own favorite pretend activities.

9. Solitary play (Isenberg & Jacobs, 1982). It is important for children to be able to play alone. Imagination is the key to enjoyable solitary play. As you observe your children in safe solitary play, you will notice a contentment within themselves which helps them to become independent. As children become better able to occupy themselves, you will find yourself with more free time, and you will be hearing less and less that all too familiar phrase, "Mommy, Mommy, what can I do now???"

10. Cooperative play (Adcock & Segal, 1983). Active imaginations lead to wonderful cooperative play wherein children are able to get along well enjoying each other's company without selfish disagreements. Ideally, children can play in harmony without the need for adult interference. Several of you have mentioned to me how well your children play with each other after storytime at home.

If you would like to read articles on PLAY by any of the above-named educators, I can locate them for you. Again, thanks for your cooperation.

HAVE FUN AT PLAY AND HAPPY READING!!

APPENDIX Q

NEWSLETTER ON EMERGENT LITERACY

EMERGENT LITERACY - INFORMATIONAL NEWSLETTER
Susan Fay Ryan - Nova University

Dear Parents, Grandparents, Guardians,

EMERGENT LITERACY IS A TERM OFTEN USED NOW TO DESCRIBE ALL THE EXPERIENCES YOUR CHILD UNDERGOES FROM BIRTH ONWARD THAT PREPARE HIM/HER FOR READING. THE TERM 'READING READINESS' IS NO LONGER USED BECAUSE EXPERTS BELIEVE THERE IS NO PRECISE POINT IN TIME AT WHICH A CHILD IS READY TO READ. THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION IS CONDENSED FROM THE WORK OF RESEARCHERS IN THE FIELD. (Chapter II, Literature Review.)

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1. Teale & Sulzby (1986) offer some explanations:
   a. Children's emerging literacy is deeply rooted in early childhood home and community reading and writing experiences before they receive formal instruction at school.
   b. Writing and reading experiences go together. One does not come before the other.
   c. Children's surroundings and daily activities prepare them for reading and literacy.

2. Strickland & Morrow (1989) point out that home and community settings are crucial nurturing environments for literacy.

3. Clay (1977) states that ". . . the child who has not learned that books contain interesting ideas has missed valuable learning."

4. Lindauer (1988) writes about wordless books (picture books) and their importance for literacy. They can bring out creativity and encourage the use of imagination. Looking at wordless books also helps children develop physical skills which lead to reading coordination.

5. Elkind (1987) talks about children having a time each day for quiet activities and listening to a story.

6. McCuen (1988) stresses the importance of quality children's literature.

7. The IRA (International Reading Association) writes about children's pleasure reading. Reading should be thought of as a source of enjoyment.

8._____ PRESCHOOL WANTS YOU!! to enjoy wonderful moments of reading with your child. We hope you will check out books from our new library to your HEART'S CONTENT!!

*** REMEMBER: AT _____ PRESCHOOL, WE PLAY WITH THE PRO'S ***

PRESCHOOLERS READING OFTEN!!!

APPENDIX R

BUTTON: PARENT READING OFTEN

I'M A PRO
PARENT READING OFTEN

APPENDIX S

STICKER & BOOKMARK

I'M A PRO
PRESCHOOLER READING OFTEN

I'M A PRO

APPENDIX T

BUTTON FOR OLDER PRESCHOOLERS

I'm PROud of Myself
I'M A PRO
Preschooler Reading Often

APPENDIX U

BUTTON: WE PLAY WITH THE PRO'S

PARENTS AS LITERACY ADVOCATES FOR YOUNGSTERS
WE
PLAY
WITH THE
PROS
AT
JUPITER PRESCHOOL
PRESCHOOLERS READING OPTION

APPENDIX V

SONG

This musical number is to be sung just prior to the reading activity.
(Teachers and preschoolers clap their hands.)

LITERACY AND LOVE GO HAND IN HAND

OR

(LET'S PLAY WITH THE PRO'S)

CHORUS
I'M A PRO!
I'M A PRO!
I'M A PRO, PRO, PRO!

I'M A PRO!
IM A PRO!
I'M A PRO, PRO, PRO!

HEY, PRESCHOOLERS, WHAT'S A PRO? (Answer: Preschooler Reading Often)
HEY, PRESCHOOLERS, WHAT'S A PRO? (Answer: Preschooler Reading Often)

JUPITER PRESCHOOL IS A READING WONDERLAND

WHERE LITERACY AND LOVE GO HAND IN HAND.

WE USE PLAY TO HELP ME BE A PRO;

LET'S READ EVERY DAY AND HAVE FUN AS I GROW!

REPEAT ENTIRE CHORUS

NOV, LET'S PLAY WITH THE PRO'S!!
(Teachers and students cheer and applaud.)

BEGIN READING ACTIVITY